LASKAR JIHAD
ISLAM, MILITANCY AND THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY IN POST-NEW ORDER INDONESIA

Laskar Jihad
Islam, strijdvaardig activisme en de zoektocht naar identiteit
in het Indonesië na de val van de Nieuwe Orde
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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Noorhaidi

ABSTRACT

This study analyses the intellectual and political history of Laskar Jihad, the most spectacular Muslim paramilitary group that emerged in Indonesia in the aftermath of the collapse of the New Order regime in May 1998. Using an interpretive framework derived from social movement theory and identity politics, this study exposes the roots of the group and its transformation into a militant, jihadist movement. Based on extensive fieldwork, numerous interviews and a study of the movement's literature, this study demonstrates that the very existence of Laskar Jihad cannot be dissociated from Saudi Arabia's immensely ambitious global campaign for the Wahhabization of the Muslim *umma*. Operating under the banner of the transnational Salafi *da'wa* movement, this campaign has succeeded in disseminating the Wahhabi message around the world. The impact of this campaign has been felt in Indonesia since the mid-1980s, reflecting the success of the movement's proponents to attract a significant number of followers and establish an exclusive current of Islamic activism.

This study addresses how the rapid efflorescence of the Salafi movement coincided with increasing tension among its protagonists caused by their increasing competition to become the movement's legitimate representative. Fragmentation and conflict among the Salafis became inevitable. The movement's main actor was Ja'far Umar Thalib, a typical cadre of Islamism who grew up in the puritanical atmosphere of al-Irsyad and Persis, two reformist Muslim organizations in Indonesia. His militancy matured in Pakistan, and he went to Afghanistan to fight with the Afghan *mujāhids*. Upon return, he immediately immersed himself in Salafi activism, giving lectures and sermons in Salafi teaching centres scattered among various Indonesian cities. Bolstered by further study with Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī of Yemen, he quickly emerged as the movement's most visible, and leading, authority.

Utilizing pre-existing networks and interpersonal bonds formed through his activism in the Salafi movement, Ja'far Umar Thalib mobilized thousands of Salafis and other aspirant *mujāhids* to join Laskar Jihad. Through conspiracy rhetoric blaming Zionist and Christian international powers for the escalation of the Moluccan conflict, he created a pretext for collective action that encouraged an analytical shift from individuals to groups. Based on this pretext, which was strengthened and legitimized by *fatwās* from prominent religious authorities in the Middle East, the Salafis justified their actions and created a new collective

identity as heroes for their religion and fellow faithful and as patriots for their beloved state. Thus it is not surprising that they vied with one another to captain the ships that would take them to the frontlines of the Moluccas in a fervid attempt to absorb themselves into a protracted, bloody communal conflict in the islands. For these youths jihad seems not only a demonstration of their commitment to Islam but also a way to express their resentment and frustration in the face of rapid modernization and globalization.

From April 2000 until its disbanding in October 2002, Laskar Jihad dispatched more than 7,000 fighters to the Moluccas to confront Christians. This brief episode of jihad activism owed much to the support of military elites who saw it as a chance to use militant Muslim groups to retaliate against Abdurrahman Wahid for having sacked them from key military positions. Ironically, however, most of the Laskar Jihad fighters were unskilled combatants. They went to the Moluccas with limited experience and an untried fighting capacity. Their greatest achievement perhaps lay in creating propaganda that successfully influenced public opinion through the media. Given this fact, this study argues that the jihad conducted by Laskar Jihad can be more accurately described as drama: an endeavour by the Salafis to shore up their self-image as the most committed defenders of Islam, and thereby to put their identity on the map of Indonesian Islam.

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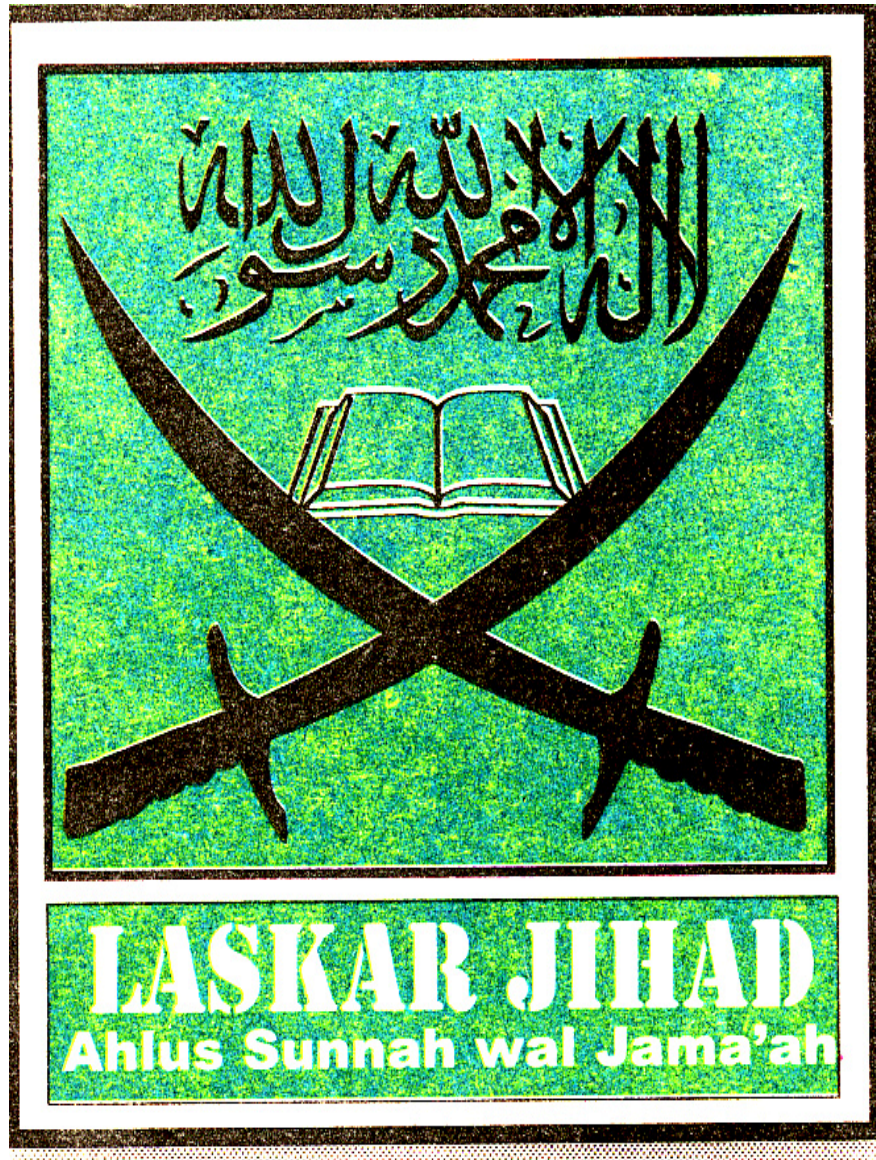
NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

This book uses the system of Arabic transliteration adopted by many institutions and journals in the Anglo-Saxon world, such as the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., USA, and the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*. This system has been departed from in cases where specific transcriptions have come into general use. The words such as Islam, Qur'an, and Jihad, for instance, are written as they are, instead of *Islām*, *Qur'ān*, and *Jihād*. Names of personalities, organizations and foundations, as well as titles of books, journals and articles are rendered according to locally applied spellings and transliterations. The plural of Arabic words is formed simply by adding 's' to their more familiar singular forms: thus, *fatwās* instead of *fatāwā* or *ḥadīths* instead of *aḥādīth*.

Laskar Jihad's logo, crossed sabers with the *shahāda* on them

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Bakorstanas	Badan Koordinasi Bantuan Pemantapan Stabilitas Nasional (Coordination Board for the Assistance of the Maintenance of National Stability).
Banser	Multi-purpose Unit, the paramilitary wing of the Nahdlatul Ulama youth organization, Anshor.
BBM	Bugis Buton Makassar (Buginese Butonese Makassarese).
BIMM	Badan Imarat Muslim Maluku (Council of United Moluccan Muslims).
BKPM	Badan Koordinasi Pemuda Masjid (Coordinating Board of Mosque Youth)
BKPMI	Badan Kerjasama Pondok Pesantren seluruh Indonesia (Islamic Boarding School Cooperative Council of Indonesia).
BPK	Barisan Pemuda Ka‘bah (Ka‘ba Youth Squad).
Brimob	Brigade Mobil (Mobile Brigade).
Bulog	Badan Urusan Logistik (Board of Logistic Affairs).
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIC	Committee of Islamic Charity (Lajna Birr al-Islāmī).
CIDES	Centre for Information and Development Studies.
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies.
DDII	Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation).
DI	Darul Islam (Islamic Abode).
DPD	Dewan Pimpinan Daerah (District Executive Board).
DPP	Dewan Pimpinan Pusat (Central Executive Board).
DPW	Dewan Pimpinan Wilayah (Provincial Executive Board).
FHBB	Front Hizbullah Bulan Bintang (God’s Army Front of Crescent Moon Party).
FKAWJ	Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama‘ah (Communication Forum of the Followers of the *Sunna* and the Community of the Prophet).
FKM	Front Kedaulatan Maluku (Moluccan Sovereignty Front).
FPI	Front Pembela Islam (Front of the Defenders of Islam).

FPIM	Front Pembela Islam Maluku (Front of the Defenders of Islam in the Moluccas).
GAM	Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Aceh Freedom Movement).
GDP	Gross Domestic Product.
GPM	Gerakan Papua Merdeka (Papua Freedom Movement).
Golkar	Golongan Karya (Functionalist Party).
Hammas	Himpunan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim antar-Kampus (Collaborative Action of University Muslim Students).
HMI	Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (Muslim Student Association)
HMI-MPO	Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam-Majelis Penyelamat Organisasi (Muslim Student Association-the Assembly of the Saviour of the Organization)
HT Indonesia	Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Party of Liberation).
HW	Hizbul Watan (National Party, Muhammadiyah Scout).
ICMI	Ikatan Cendikiawan Muslim se-Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Intellectual Association).
IIFSO	International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations.
IIRO	International Islamic Relief Organization (Hai'at Ighātha al-Islāmiyya al-'Ālamiyya).
IPB	Institut Pertanian Bogor (Institute of Agriculture of Bogor).
IPS	Institute for Policy Studies
ITB	Institut Teknologi Bandung (Institute of Technology of Bandung).
IRM	Ikatan Remaja Muhammadiyah (Muhammadiyah Youth Association).
JI	Jama'ah Islamiyah (Islamic Community).
JIL	Jaringan Islam Liberal (Liberal Islam Network).
JIM	Jama'ah Ikhwanul Muslimin [Indonesia] (Community of Indonesian Muslim Brotherhood).
KFC	Kentucky Fried Chickens
KAMMI	Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia (United Action of Indonesian Muslim Students).
KISDI	Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam (Indonesian Committee for the Solidarity of the Muslim World).
Kodam	Komando Daerah Militer (Regional Military Command).
KOMNASHAM	Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia (National Commission of Human Rights).
Kompak	Komite Penanggulangan Krisis (Committee for Overcoming Crises).
Kopassus	Komando Pasukan Khusus (Special Armed Force Command).

Korem	Komando Resort Militer (District Military Command).
LDK	Lembaga Dakwah Kampus (University *Da'wa* Organization).
LIPIA	Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Bahasa Arab (Institute of the Study for Islam and Arabic).
Litsus	Lembaga Penelitian Khusus (Board for Special Investigation).
LJ	Laskar Jihad (Jihad Militia Force).
LK	Laskar Kristus (Christ Militia Force)
LKMD	Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa (Village Community Resilience Board).
LMD	Lembaga Mushawarah Desa (Village Assembly).
LMI	Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia (Indonesian Holy Warrior Force).
LPBA	Lembaga Pengajaran Bahasa Arab (Institute of Arabic Teaching).
LPI	Laskar Pembela Islam (Defenders of Islam Force).
Masyumi	Majelis Syura Muslimin Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Consultative Assembly).
Menwa	Resimen Mahasiswa (University Student Regiment).
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front.
MMI	Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (Indonesian Holy Warrior Assembly).
MPR	Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly).
MUI	Majelis Ulama Indonesia (Council of Indonesian *'Ulamā'*).
NII	Negara Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic State).
NIN	Negara Islam Nusantara (Archipelagic Islamic State).
NKK/BKK	Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus-Badan Koordinasi Kampus (Normalization of Campus Policy-Campus Coordination Board)
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama (Association of Muslim Scholars).
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conferences.
P4	Pedoman Penghayatan Pengamalan Pancasila (Guide to Comprehension and Practice of the Pancasila).
Pam Swakarsa	Pasukan Pengamanan Swakarsa (Self-Service Security Force).
PAN	Partai Amanat Nasional (National Mandate Party)
PAS	Partai Aksi Islam se-Malaysia (Pan-Malaysian Islamic Action Party).
Paskhas	Korps Pasukan Khas (Special Force Corps).
PB	Pendekar Banten (Banten Warriors).
PBB	Partai Bulan Bintang (Crescent Moon Party).

PDI	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (Indonesian Democratic Party).
PDI-P	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle).
Pelni	Pelayaran Nasional (National Shipping Company).
Persis	Persatuan Islam (Islamic Union).
PGAN	Pendidikan Guru Agama Negeri (State Islamic Teachers Training School)
PII	Pelajar Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Students).
PK	Partai Keadilan (Justice Party).
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party).
PKS	Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Prosperity and Justice Party)
PPMI	Persatuan Pekerja Muslim Indonesia (Association of Indonesian Muslim Workers).
PPP	Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party).
PRRI	Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia.
RAI	Rābiṭat al-ʻĀlam al-Islāmī (Muslim World League).
RMS	Republik Maluku Selatan (Republic of the South Moluccas).
SDI	Sarekat Dagang Islam (Muslim Merchant Union).
SI	Sarekat Islam (Islamic League).
STAIN	Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (State College of Islamic Studies).
STIIBA	Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Islam dan Bahasa Arab (College of Islamic and Arabic Studies).
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Armed Forces).
TNT	Trinitrotoluene
TPM	Tim Pengacara Muslim (Muslim Attorney Team).
UKIM	Universitas Kristen Indonesia Maluku (Indonesian Christian University of the Moluccas).
UMI	Universitas Muslimin Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim University).
Unpatti	Universitas Pattimura (Pattimura University).
UPN	Universitas Pembangunan Nasional (National University of Development).
USCRIF	United States Commission on International Religious Freedom.
WAMY	World Assembly of Muslim Youth (al-Nadwa al-ʻĀlamiyya li al-Shabāb al-Islāmī).
WCM	World Council of Mosques (al-Majlis al-Islāmī li al-Masājid).
Yon Gab	Batalyon Gabungan (TNI Combined Battalion).

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On 21 May 1998 Indonesia witnessed the collapse of the Soeharto-led New Order authoritarian regime that had been in power for over thirty-two years. This dramatic event was precipitated by the Asian economic crisis in mid-1997, which brought about the dramatic meltdown of the Indonesian currency, inflation, mass dismissals and unemployment. As the crisis deepened, voices of dissent and opposition to the regime increased. Pervasive disappointment and frustration spawned a wave of popular student-led protests that also involved intellectuals, professionals, activists from non-governmental organizations and other elements of Indonesian civil society. These massive demonstrations called for reform and demanded Soeharto's removal. Following the bloody riots that pounded Jakarta on 14 and 15 May 1998, when hundreds were killed and numerous Chinese women were raped, Soeharto announced his resignation, and then vice president B.J. Habibie was immediately sworn in as his replacement.[1]

Soeharto's fall proved to be a decisive democratic breakthrough. Under the (as it turned out) transitional presidencies of Habibie and his successor Abdurrahman Wahid, a far-reaching process of liberalization and democratization, coupled with the weakening of state power, utterly transformed the political landscape. A variety of ideologies, identities and interests that had previously been repressed rose to the surface and expressed themselves. They competed for the newly liberated public sphere and fought for popular support. Paradoxically, in several provinces in Indonesia, notably West and Central Kalimantan, Eastern Nusa Tenggara, the Moluccas and Central Sulawesi, riots and communal conflicts flared up along religious, racial and ethnic divides. In a very short

[1] For a further account on the fall of Soeharto, see Donald K. Emmerson, 'Exit and Aftermath. The Crisis of 1997-98', in Donald K. Emmerson (ed.), *Indonesia Beyond Suharto: Polity, Economy, Society, Transition* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), pp. 295-344; Edward Aspinall, 'Opposition and Elite Conflict in the Fall of Soeharto', in Geoff Forrester and R.J. May (eds.), *The Fall of Soeharto* (Singapore: Select Books, 1999), pp. 130-53; and John McBeth, 'Political Update', in Geoff Forrester, *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos?* (Leiden: KITLV, 1999), pp. 21-32.

period of time, these conflicts cost thousands of lives and drove the country to the brink of civil war.[2]

During this tumultuous and chaotic transition, a number of Muslim paramilitary groups with names like Laskar Pembela Islam (Defenders of Islam Force), Laskar Jihad (Holy War Force) and Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia (Indonesian Holy Warriors Force) achieved notoriety by taking to the streets to demand the comprehensive implementation of *sharī'a* (Islamic law), raiding cafes, discotheques, casinos, brothels and other reputed dens of iniquity, and most important, calling for jihad in the Moluccas and other trouble spots. Through these actions, they criticized the prevailing political, social and economic system for having failed to save the Indonesian Muslim *umma* (community of believers) from the on-going crisis, while demonstrating their determination to position themselves as the most committed defenders of Islam.[3]

The efflorescence of these organizations have completed and facilitated the development of similar vigilante youth groups organized by political parties, mass organizations and the ruling regime. Among these groups are Barisan Pemuda Ka'bah (Ka'ba Youth Squad), Pam Swakarsa (Self-Service Security Force), Pendekar Banten (Banten Warriors), Gerakan Pemuda Islam (Muslim Youth Movement, GPI) and Front Hizbullah Bulan Bintang (God's Army Front of Crescent Moon Party). In expressing themselves and their interests in the Indonesian public sphere, these groups organized with other conservative Muslim organizations, such as Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas Dunia Islam (Indonesian Committee for the Solidarity of the Muslim World, KISDI), Jama'ah Ikhwanul Muslimin Indonesia (Community of Indonesian Muslim

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[2] These conflicts have become the subject of numerous volumes. See Ingrid Wessel and Georgia Wimhofer (eds.), *Violence in Indonesia* (Hamburg: Abera, 2001); Benedict Anderson (ed.), *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia* (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia program, Cornell University, 2001); Freek Colombijn and J. Thomas Lindblad (eds.), *Roots of Violence in Indonesia. Contemporary Violence in Historical Perspective* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002); and Chaider S. Bamualim et al. (eds.), *Communal Conflicts in Contemporary Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pusat Bahasa dan Budaya IAIN Jakarta and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 2002).

[3] There are some preliminary, somewhat superficial, surveys about these groups. See Chaeder Bamualim et al., *Gerakan Islam Radikal Kontemporer di Indonesia: Front Pembela Islam (FPI) dan Laskar Jihad (FKAWJ)*, unpublished research report (Jakarta: IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2001); Jajang Jahroni et al., *Hubungan Agama dan Negara di Indonesia: Studi tentang Pandangan Politik Laskar Jihad, Front Pembela Islam, Ikhwanul Muslimin, dan Laskar Mujahidin*, unpublished research report (Jakarta: INSEP-LIPI, 2002); Imam Tholkhah and Choirul Fuad Yusuf (eds.), *Gerakan Islam Kontemporer Era Reformasi* (Jakarta: Badan Litbang Agama dan Diklat Keagamaan Depag, 2002); Khamami Zada, *Islam Radikal, Pergulatan Ormas-Ormas Islam Garis Keras* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2002); Zainuddin Fananie et al., *Radikalisme Keagamaan dan Perubahan Sosial* (Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press, 2002); Alip Purnomo, *FPI Disalahpahami* (Jakarta: Mediatama Indonesia, 2003); and Yunanto S. et al., *Militant Islamic Movements in Indonesia and South-East Asia* (Jakarta: The Ridep Institute and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2003). In my previous study, I myself have discussed in passing the profiles of these groups: see Noorhaidi Hasan, 'Faith and Politics. The Rise of the Laskar Jihad in the Era of Transition in Indonesia', *Indonesia* 73 (April 2002), pp. 145-69.

Brotherhood, JIM), Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Party of Liberation, HT), Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim Indonesia (the United Action of Indonesian Muslim Students, Kammi) and Himpunan Aksi Mahasiswa Muslim antar-Kampus (Collaborative Action of University Muslim Students, Hammas).

Laskar Pembela Islam (LPI)

Laskar Pembela Islam was the paramilitary division of the Front Pembela Islam (Front of the Defenders of Islam, FPI), which was founded by Muhammad Rizieq Syihab (b. 1965), a young man of Hadrami descent born into a family of *sayyids* who claimed they were descendants of the Prophet. He collaborated with other leading figures in the *sayyid* network, including Idrus Jamilullail, Ali Sahil, Saleh al-Habsyi, Segaf Mahdi, Muhsin Ahmad Alatas and Ali bin Alwi Ba'agil.[4] Before establishing this organization, he had already made a name as a well-known religious preacher in addition to his daily tasks as a religious teacher in an Islamic school of the Jamiatul Khair Hadrami organization in Tanah Abang, Central Jakarta. This area is known as one of the most important centres of *sayyid* influence in the Indonesian capital. The nearby Kwitang Mosque serves as the 'political centre' of the *sayyids*, to which powerful figures associated with the New Order have affiliated themselves. Having graduated from the Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Bahasa Arab (the Institute for the Study of Islam and Arabic, LIPIA), a Jakarta-based institute of higher learning directly sponsored by Saudi Arabia, Muhammad Rizieq Syihab had the opportunity to continue his studies at the *Tarbiya* Faculty at the Imām Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd University in Riyad under the sponsorship of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).[5]

Laskar Pembela Islam was, to a large extent, not founded on a firm institutional basis. This group was loosely organized with open membership. Most members came from the mosque youth associations scattered throughout Jakarta and a number of Islamic schools (*madrasas*) in the region. Others, particularly in the rank and file, were simply jobless youths, including those from *preman* (thug) groups, who joined for the promise of payment for each action. The organization's leadership encouraged members to listen to regular religious lectures given by Muhammad Rizieq Syihab, who consistently emphasized the importance of jihad and the spirit of the motto 'to live nobly or better die in holy war as a martyr'.[6] In the course of time, Laskar Pembela Islam

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[4] M. Rizieq Syihab, *Kyai Kampung: Ujung Tombak Perjuangan Umat Islam* (Ciputat: Sekretariat FPI, 1999).

[5] For more information about this figure, see Suara Hidayatullah, 'Al-Habib Muhammad Rizieq, Ketua Umum Front Pembela Islam', interview, *Suara Hidayatullah* 4: 12 (August 1999), pp. 64-69.

[6] This motto reads in Bahasa Indonesia as '*Hiduplah secara mulia atau lebih baik mati secara syahid*'.

succeeded in extending its network to cities outside Jakarta, claiming to have established eighteen provincial and more than fifty district branches with tens of thousands of sympathizers throughout Indonesia.

As a paramilitary organization, however, Laskar Pembela Islam had a distinct stratified system. It was divided into *jundis* (from the Arabic *jund*, literally meaning 'soldier'), which are similar to platoons, each of which consisted of twenty-one members. Each *jundi* was led by a *ra'is* (Ar. *rā'is,* literally meaning 'leader'), subordinate to an *amir* (Ar. *'amīr,* literally meaning 'ruler'). The *amirs* were practically the leaders of Laskar Pembela Islam at the sub-district level. They were subordinate to *qa'ids* (Ar. *qā'id,* literally meaning 'commander'), who served as leaders at the district level, and *walis* (Ar. *wālī,* literally meaning 'guardian'), leaders at the provincial level. All *walis* were subordinate to the *imam* (Ar. *imām*, the head of staff), the second to the commander-in-chief, known among the members as *imam besar*, 'great leader'.[7]

Laskar Pembela Islam first made its presence felt in a mass demonstration on 17 August 1998, where it adamantly challenged those elements who had rejected Habibie as Soeharto's successor. It became the most active group in conducting what it called *razia maksiat*, raids on vice. Armed with sticks, members repeatedly attacked cafés, discotheques, casinos, and brothels, shouting the slogan *al-'amr bi'l- ma'rūf wa-l-nahy 'an al-munkar*, a Qur'anic phrase meaning performing good deeds and opposing vice. In perpetrating these actions, they usually moved slowly, approaching their targets using open trucks. They quickly broke up whatever activities were going on and destroyed anything they found there. These actions did not raise any significant challenge from security agents.

To voice its political demands more loudly, Laskar Pembela Islam organized more mass demonstrations. Celebrating its first anniversary in August 1999, thousands of members marched to the headquarters of the Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly, MPR). They waved banners and posters supporting Habibie's reelection bid, while strenuously and unequivocally decrying Megawati Soekarnoputri's presidential candidacy.[8] At the same time, they demanded the government abrogate the policy of *asas tunggal,* or 'sole foundation', which required all political and social organizations to accept the Pancasila, the ideology of the state, as the only foundation of their existence. They even demanded MPR enforce the Jakarta Charter, once intended to be the preamble to the constitution.[9] In this document,

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[7] On the complete structure of the Laskar Pembela Islam organization, see Front Pembela Islam, *Struktur Laskar FPI* (Jakarta: Sekretariat FPI, 1999).

[8] As for their repudiation of the Megawati candidacy, see Front Pembela Islam, *Maklumat Front Pembela Islam tentang Presiden Wanita* (Jakarta: Front Pembela Islam, 2001).

[9] On the proposal of FPI about the enforcement of the Jakarta Charter, see M. Rizieq Syihab, *Dialog Piagam Jakarta: Kumpulan Jawaban Seputar Keraguan terhadap Penegakan Syari'at Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pustaka Ibnu Sidah, 2000).

the statement 'with the obligation to carry out the *sharī'a* for its adherents' was added to the first principle (Belief in God) of the Pancasila, which would have given Islamic law constitutional status.

On one occasion, the members of Laskar Pembela Islam fearlessly attacked the Komisi Nasional Hak Azazi Manusia (National Commission of Human Rights/Komnasham), which was condemned for acting unfairly towards Muslims and favouring Christians. At that time, the commission was investigating the past actions of certain army generals, particularly then Minister of Defence Wiranto, who was suspected of human rights violations during military operations in East Timor. Laskar Pembela Islam even dared to take over the Governor's Office of Jakarta and forced Governor Sutiyoso to reconsider his policies pertaining to places of amusement. They issued an ultimatum that the governor promptly shut down a number of discotheques and restrict their hours of operation.[10]

Laskar Jihad (LJ)

The loose character of Laskar Pembela Islam's membership makes it significantly distinguishable from Laskar Jihad. The latter is a paramilitary group uniting young men who call themselves Salafis, followers of the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*, pious ancestors. This group was active under the umbrella organization Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jama'ah (Forum for Followers of the Sunna and the Community of the Prophet), henceforth called FKAWJ, whose establishment was officially inaugurated in the palpably religious mass gathering, *tabligh akbar,* held in Yogyakarta in January 2000. Even before its official foundation, FKAWJ was already in existence. It had its beginnings in the Jama'ah Ihyaus Sunnah, which was basically an exclusive *da'wa* (propagation of Islam) movement focusing on the purity of the faith, *tawḥīd*, and the subsequent moral integrity of individuals.

Laskar Jihad was established by Ja'far Umar Thalib (b. 1961) and leading personalities among the Salafis including Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, Ayip Syafruddin and Ma'ruf Bahrun. Ja'far was born into a Hadrami family active in al-Irsyad, a modernist Muslim organization of predominantly Indonesian Hadramis. Before studying at LIPIA, he had been enrolled at a *pesantren*, an Islamic boarding school, under the aegis of another Muslim modernist organization, Persatuan Islam (Islamic Union, Persis), in Bangil, East Java. He then went on to broaden his insights into Islam by studying at the Islamic Mawdudi Institute in Lahore, Pakistan. During his study there, he had the opportunity to go to Afghanistan, which was then in the throes of a long, grueling war against the Soviet Union. He claims to have had awesome experiences of the Afghan battlefields with different factions of Afghan

[10] See Front Pembela Islam, *Satu Tahun Front Pembela Islam: Kilas Balik Satu Tahun FPI* (Jakarta: Sekretariat FPI, 1999).

mujāhids (holy warriors). This heroic experience was later reinforced by his 'academic journey' to the Middle East to study with prominent religious authorities, particularly Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī of Yemen.

Laskar Jihad was established as an extension of the Special Division of FKAWJ, whose headquarters was located in Yogyakarta, with provincial and district branches scattered in almost every Indonesian province. This division was initially set up as a security unit for FKAWJ, particularly, to safeguard its public activities. Being modeled after the military organization, Laskar Jihad consisted of one brigade divided into battalions, companies, platoons, teams and one intelligence section. Its four battalions included those of Abu Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, 'Umar bin Khaṭṭāb, 'Uthmān bin 'Affān, and 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib. Each battalion had four companies, each company four platoons and each platoon three teams of eleven members each. Ja'far Umar Thalib himself was appointed commander-in-chief and was assisted by a number of field commanders. The symbol of this group was two crossed sabres under the words *'Lā ilāha illa Allāh, Muḥammad Rasūl Allāh'* ('There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger').

Laskar Jihad caught the public eye when it held a *tabligh akbar* at the Senayan Main Stadium in Jakarta in early April 2000. Attended by about ten thousand participants, this *tabligh akbar* decried the 'disaster' afflicting Moluccan Muslims, who were perceived as being threatened by genocide. To counteract the threat, Ja'far Umar Thalib, as commander-in-chief, proclaimed the necessity of armed jihad. He openly stated his determination to stand shoulder to shoulder with Moluccan Muslims fighting against Christian enemies. Subsequently, he established a paramilitary training camp in Bogor, south of Jakarta. The so-called united paramilitary training was organized under the supervision of former members of university student regiments (*resimen mahasiswa*) and veterans of the Afghan, Moro and Kashmir Wars. It was reported that the training also involved some military personnel.

In fact, Laskar Jihad emerged as the largest and best organized group sending voluntary jihad fighters to the Moluccas. It claimed to have sent more than seven thousands fighters over a two-year period. Deployed in different places to confront Christians, their presence undoubtedly changed the map of the on-going communal conflict in the islands. Fuelled by the spirit of jihad brought by these fighters, Moluccan Muslims appeared to become more aggressive in their attacks against Christians, believing that the hour had struck to take their revenge. Laskar Jihad reinforced its existence in the islands by addressing the social issues and disseminating religious messages. It not only established Islamic kindergartens, primary schools and Qur'anic recitation courses but also went door-to-door to preach to people as directly as possible. Later, it sought to extend the zone of its jihad by sending hundreds of fighters to Poso, Central Sulawesi. Although this attempt failed, its fighters even tried to land in West Papua and Aceh.

Like Laskar Pembela Islam, Laskar Jihad repeatedly instigated violent street riots. In the name of the implementation of *sharīʿa*, its members attacked cafes, brothels and gambling dens in several cities. Since calls for the implementation of *sharīʿa* have become more fluently articulated across the country, they even levied a *rajm* sentence on a fighter who committed rape and stoned him to death. They took to the streets to protest a number of Abdurrahman Wahid's policies, such as his proposal to withdraw the MPR's decree banning the Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party, PKI). Laskar Jihad considered he had failed to carry out his duty as a Muslim leader and had allowed his country be trapped in a conspiracy believed to be the work of the West and Israeli Zionism.

Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia (LMI)

Another paramilitary group, Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia, has emerged as the latest and probably most deeply rooted militant organization in post-New Order Indonesia. It is a loose alliance of a dozen minor Muslim paramilitary organizations that had been scattered among cities such as Solo, Yogyakarta, Kebumen, Purwokerto, Tasikmalaya and Makassar. Notable member organizations are Laskar Santri (Muslim Student Paramilitary Force), Laskar Jundullah (God's Army Paramilitary Force), Kompi Badar (Badr Company), Brigade Taliban (Taliban Brigade), Corps Hizbullah Divisi Sunan Bonang (God's Party Corps of the Sunan Bonang Division), Front Pembela Islam Surakarta (Front of the Defenders of Islam of Surakarta/FPIS) and Pasukan Komando Mujahidin (Holy Warrior Command Force).

Laskar Mujahidin falls under the umbrella organization Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia (Indonesian Holy Warrior Assembly). This assembly was established as the result of the so-called 'first national congress of *mujahidin*', in Yogyakarta in August 2000. Around two thousand participants attended the congress. Among them I observed members of the aforementioned groups proudly wearing their own uniforms and guarding the entrances to the congress. At that time, all the participants were absorbed in discussing one central theme: the enforcement of *sharīʿa* as necessary to curb the problems and disasters afflicting Indonesia. Within this context, notions of *khilāfa Islāmiyya* (Islamic Caliphate), *imāma* (imamate) and jihad were also discussed.[11] The congress drafted a charter called the Piagam Yogyakarta (the Yogyakarta Charter), which insists on rejecting all ideologies confronting Islam and to continue preaching and conducting jihad for the dignity of Islam.[12]

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[11] Irfan S. Awwas (ed.), *Risalah Kongres Mujahidin I dan Penegakan Syari'ah Islam* (Yogyakarta: Wihdah Press, 2001).

[12] Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, *Piagam Yogyakarta* (Yogyakarta: Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, 2000).

The congress opened on 5 August and ended two days later. This date was apparently not accidental. On the same date fifty-one years earlier, S.M. Kartosuwirjo proclaimed the Negara Islam Indonesia, the Islamic State of Indonesia, an independent Islamic state within Indonesia. This dramatic event sparked the *Darul Islam* (Islamic Abode) rebellion in West Java, Aceh and South Sulawesi.[13] Inspired by the zest of the rebellion to establish an Islamic state, the so-called Negara Islam Indonesia (NII) movement arose in the 1970s. This underground movement appeared to draw other disaffected radicals into its orbit, forming small quietist groups named *usrah* (Ar. *'usra*, literally meaning 'family') in various cities under different names, such as Jama'ah Islamiyah (Muslim community) in Solo, Generasi 554 in Jakarta and NII Cirebon in Cirebon.[14]

Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia recruited a number of leading personalities from different Islamic organizations and political parties, including Deliar Noer, Mochtar Naim, Mawardi Noor, Ali Yafie, Alawi Muhammad, Ahmad Syahirul Alim and A.M. Saefuddin. They were appointed members of the so-called *ahl al-ḥall wa'l-'aqd*, literally 'those who have the power to bind and unbind', a kind of supreme body of the organization that resembles the advisory council. This body was led by Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, on whom was bestowed the title *Amirul Mujahidin* (Ar. '*Amīr al-Mujāhidīn*, 'the leader of holy warriors'). He was an elderly figure of Hadrami descent, who, in collaboration with Abdullah Sungkar, established the Pesantren al-Mukmin*,* Ngruki, a conservative Islamic boarding school, in Solo, Central Java, in 1972.[15] Both had been arrested in November 1978 for allegedly leading Jama'ah Islamiyah, and fled to Malaysia to escape another prison term in 1985. Addressing the congress, he proclaimed that the application of *sharī'a* was absolutely essential and argued that its rejection must be countered by jihad.[16]

The congress itself was initiated by Irfan S. Awwas, chairman of the executive committee of the assembly. He was the editor-in-chief of the banned magazine *Arrisalah* in Yogyakarta and served nine years of a thirteen-year prison sentence for activities associated with the NII movement. In this committee there were a number of departments that addressed particular subjects, including the implementation of *sharī'a*, internal relations, resource

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[13] Concerning this rebellion, see Hiroko Horikoshi, 'The Dar-ul-Islam Movement of West Java (1942-62). An Experience in the Historical Process', *Indonesia* 20 (1975), pp. 59-86; and C. van Dijk, *Rebellion under the Banner of Islam: The Darul Islam in Indonesia* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981).

[14] For an overview of the NII movement, see June Chandra Santosa, *Modernization, Utopia and the Rise of Islamic Radicalism in Indonesia*, PhD Dissertation (Boston: Boston University, 1996), appendix 3. This issue will be elaborated on later.

[15] As for the profile of this *pesantren*, see Zuly Qodir, *Ada Apa Dengan Pesantren Ngruki* (Yogyakarta: Pondok Edukasi, 2003); E.S. Soepriyadi, *Ngruki & Jaringan Terorisme* (Jakarta: Al-Mawardi Prima, 2003).

[16] Awwas (2001), p. 139.

development, political Islam, *bayt al-māl* ('house of treasury'), data and information, social welfare, militia, and women.[17] With the support of former activists of the NII movement, some of whom had had experience in the Afghan War, this committee organized a variety of programmes, including mass gatherings, discussions, seminars, publication of books and paramilitary trainings.[18]

Calls for jihad in the Moluccas and other trouble spots also satisfied the agenda of Laskar Mujahidin, which in contrast to the Laskar Jihad preferred to operate secretly in small, trained well-armed units. Publicity was the former's utmost concern, while defeating Christian enemies was the priority for the latter. In fact, Laskar Mujahidin often did not see eye-to-eye with Laskar Jihad. To guarantee the success of its jihad operations in the islands, Laskar Mujahidin reportedly received sophisticated weapons from various militia groups outside Indonesia, such as the Abu Sayyaf group in the southern Philippines. For Laskar Mujahidin, jihad in the Moluccas and other trouble spots was only a training run for real jihad against *ṭāghūt*, 'oppressive tyrants'.[19]

Anti-Americanism

These three paramilitary groups, particularly Laskar Pembela Islam and Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia, spearheaded the wave of anti-Americanism that followed the US-led air strikes on Afghanistan, which was a response to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., on 11 September 2001. Particularly in reaction to George W. Bush's statement 'you're either with us or with the terrorists', group members repeatedly flooded the area around the US Embassy in Jakarta to express their enmity and to break up the police brigade guarding the location.[20] During demonstrations, they rejected Bush's justification for bombing Afghanistan and questioned his accusations that Osama bin Lāden was behind the 11 September attacks.

When the threat of the United States military retaliation became a reality, anti-America demonstrations staged by the groups became larger and more widespread. Demonstrators condemned the attacks and demanded the government sever its diplomatic ties with the United States. Such

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[17] Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, *Mengenal Majelis Mujahidin* (Yogyakarta: Markaz Pusat Majelis Mujahidin, 2000).

[18] Interview with Irfan S. Awwas, Yogyakarta, 2 October 2001.

[19] Interview with Irfan S. Awwas, Yogyakarta, 2 October 2001.

[20] See the report made by Harold Crouch, *Indonesia. Violence and Radical Muslims*, Indonesia Briefing (Jakarta/Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2001); Donald K. Emmerson, 'Whose Eleventh? Indonesia and the Unites States Since 11 September', *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 9: 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 115- 126; and Noorhaidi Hasan, 'September 11 and Islamic Militancy in Post-New Order Indonesia', in K.S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali (eds.), *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2005), pp. 301-24.

demonstrations occurred not only in Jakarta but also in half a dozen other cities, such as Surabaya, Makassar, Medan and Solo. In some cities, demonstrators burned the American flag and McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise restaurant signs. To demonstrate their sympathy for Afghan Muslims, they even issued a threat, saying they would expel American citizens in particular and Westerners in general. Although this threat has never been acted upon, it undoubtedly aroused anxiety among most expatriates.

Paramilitary group demonstrators also displayed photographs of Bin Lāden with the slogan 'Death to the Great Satan, America!' They proclaimed Bin Lāden a hero leading what they called a holy resistance against an evil plan to destroy the Muslim *umma*. From their perspective, Bin Lāden is an innocent victim of the arrogance of the United States, which, by bombing Afghanistan, had declared war on Islam and positioned itself as the greatest enemy of Muslims. For this reason, demonstrators went a step further by calling for jihad against the United States and its related interests. They opened registration booths to recruit aspirant *mujāhids* to go to Afghanistan. Even though these threats primarily remained rhetorical, some group leaders made it known that a dozen of their holy fighters had landed in Afghanistan.[21]

Laskar Jihad preferred not to involve itself in the demonstrations, holding that demonstrations were expressions of democracy which itself opposes the absolute authority of God. Nevertheless, Ja'far Umar Thalib stated his readiness and determination to mobilize his fighters to resist the United States and what he called all manifestations of the superpower's arrogance. To him, the United States attack on Afghanistan was 'nothing less that an attack on Islam'.[22] He conveyed the sarcastic message, 'We would like to mourn over the United States, you should learn from your own arrogance. For Muslims, we would like to congratulate you on the revenge upon terrors committed by the biggest terrorist nation in the world, the United States, on Muslim nations'.[23] In a television interview, Ja'far Umar Thalib boasted that ten thousand of his fighters had been ordered to go to the battlefields in Afghanistan.[24]

Because of their persistence in criticizing the US campaign against terrorism, these groups attracted international attention. They were all suspected of links to Bin Lāden. The main suspicion was directed at Laskar Mujahidin and its association with Jama'ah Islamiyah, which was believed to be an al Qaeda-linked terrorist network operating in Southeast Asia. It received particular

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[21] 'Relawan Jihad Indonesia Masuk Peshawar', *Republika*, 9 October 2001. According to this report, at that time there had already been three hundred Indonesians in Peshawar who were prepared to cross the Pakistan-Afghanistan border and assist the Taliban.

[22] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Mampuslah Amerika', *Bulletin Laskar Jihad*, 10 (October 2001), p. 6; see also Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Menyikapi Gertakan Si Pengecut dan Penakut', *Bulletin Laskar Jihad*, 11 (November 2001), p. 6.

[23] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Mampuslah Amerika', *Bulletin Laskar Jihad*, 10 (October 2001), p. 9.

[24] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Amerika Sedang Menggali Kubur di Afghanistan', interview with Metro-TV, 8 October 2001.

attention after Malaysian and Singaporean authorities uncovered a plot to bomb the US Embassy and other Western targets in Singapore. Riduan Isamuddin or Hambali was suspected of being the principal Jama'ah Islamiyah operative in the region and of having arranged accommodations in Malaysia for Khalid Almihdhar and Nawaf Ahazmi, two of the hijackers of the American Airlines jet that crashed into the Pentagon. Subsequently, a number of people suspected of links to Jama'ah Islamiyah were arrested in the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. These included Fathur Rahman al-Gozi, Abu Jibril Abdurrahman, Taufik Abdul Halim, Faiz Abu Bakar Bafana, Agus Dwikarna, Tamsil Linrung and Abdul Jamal Balfas.[25]

A number of international terrorist experts came to engage in discussing the possible linkage between Laskar Mujahidin and al Qaeda. Rohan Gunaratna (2002), for instance, alleged a link by presenting evidence of al Qaeda involvement in terrorist acts in Indonesia.[26] Sidney Jones, a researcher at the Brussels-based International Crisis Group, (2002) issued a report highlighting the linkage and cited the Ngruki *pesantren* as the hub of the Jama'ah Islamiyah network. In this report, Jama'ah Islamiyah is defined as a clandestine regional al Qaeda-linked terrorist organization whose network of supporters is scattered across Southeast Asian countries and includes Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia, which is a militant group linked to the Partai Aksi Islam se-Malaysia (Malaysian Islamic Party, PAS), the Al-Ma'unah Islamic sect, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and several small groups in Singapore, Thailand, Burma and probably also Brunei.[27] Subsequently, Zachary Abuza (2003) pointed out that this network was set up in the mid-1990s in Malaysia by Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir in an effort to establish a pan-Islamic republic called *Negara Islam Nusantara* (Archipelagic Islamic State, NIN) and incorporating Malaysia, Indonesia, southern Thailand and the southern Philippines.[28] It should be noted, however, that the focus on 'terrorism' might prevent these analysts from saying what the networks and contacts really were about and how the ideology gradually took shape.

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[25] Agus Dwikarna was the leader of Laskar Jundullah, a faction of Laskar Mujahidin. He was arrested along with Tamsil Linrung and Abdul Jamal Balfas. See 'Detained Indonesian is associate of pro-bin Laden cleric: Philippines', *AFP*, 17 March 2002. While the last two were later released, Dwikarna was sentenced in the Philippines to ten years; see 'Agus Dwikarna Divonis 10-17 Tahun', *Republika*, 13 July 2002; see also 'Indonesian Linked to Al Qaeda Cell', *CNN*, 19 July 2002.

[26] Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (London: Hurst and Company, 2002), pp. 198-203.

[27] Sidney Jones, *Indonesia Backgrounder: How the Jemaah Islamiyyah Terrorist Network Operates*, Asia Report 43 (Jakarta/Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2002).

[28] Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia: Crucible of Terror* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2003), pp. 128-39. This book is an extension of the paper he had previously published in the journal *Contemporary Southeast Asia*. See Zachary Abuza, 'Tentacles of Terror: Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian Network', *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 24: 3 (December 2002), pp. 427-465.

Speculation associating Laskar Mujahidin with al Qaeda became more widespread when bombs exploded at Paddy's Cafe and Sari Club at Legian, Bali, in October 2002. This tragedy claimed around 200 lives, injured hundreds of people and destroyed a dozen buildings. Being the largest terrorist attack after the 11 September, the so-called Bali bombing immediately attracted worldwide attention. The international community condemned the tragedy and the harming of innocent victims. In the months following the tragedy Amrozi, Ali Ghufron, Ali Imron, Imam Samudera, Abdul Rauf and other suspects accused of being responsible for the bombing were arrested. They were all believed to be associated with Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, who had been detained a week after the bombing. After an initial period of reluctance, these arrests marked the beginning of the anti-terrorist campaign of the government of Megawati, Abdurrahman Wahid's successor.

Political Islam in an Era of Transition

There is no doubt that the rise of the aforementioned paramilitary groups constitutes the strongest sign of the expansion of political Islam in the political landscape of post-New Order Indonesia. By perpetrating radical actions, these groups not only sounded an alarm signaling the spread of a sort of privatized militancy and violence, but also challenged the legitimacy of the secular system adopted by the state, which they perceived as an extension of the Western hegemony responsible for the on-going politico-economic crisis. While condemning the system, they proposed *sharī'a* as an alternative and emphasized its superiority to any other system. In so doing, they tried to bring Islam into the centre of the discursive field to compete against other ideologies. Both implicitly and explicitly, they had a common desire not only to see Islam spread as a religion but also as a political, social, economic and cultural system.

The eruption of Islam in the political arena of post-New Order Indonesia caught the attention of many observers at home and abroad. The main reason for this was because it happened in Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world, which is associated with a peaceful and tolerant form of Islam. This peculiarity is often connected by historians with the way Islam slowly spread from coastal areas into the hinterlands and replaced the domination of Hindu and Buddhist kingdoms. In the process of adaptation, some local elements of culture were retained in the new belief system.[29] It is no surprise that despite Islam's demonstrated signs of vitality in the last two decades, currents of thought supporting religious pluralism, democracy and heightened public participation for women remained dominant. For some scholars Indonesia is a country that

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[29] There is abundant literature on the coming and expansion of Islam in the Indonesian Archipelago. See, for instance, G.W.J. Drewes, 'New Light on the Coming of Islam to Indonesia?' *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde,* 124:4 (1968), pp. 433-459; and A.H. Johns, 'Islam in Southeast Asia: Reflections and New Directions', *Indonesia* 19 (April, 1975), pp. 33-55.

continues to develop into the most pluralistic and democracy-friendly nation-state in the entire Muslim world.[30]

In scholarly work political Islam is used as an umbrella term interchangeably with Islamism. It is an alternative to the term fundamentalism, which is derived from the Christian tradition, being religious in character. Scholars generally apply the term 'political Islam' to the discourses and activisms that conceive of Islam not merely as a religion but also as a political ideology, whereby an Islamic state, or at least an Islamic society characterized by a high respect for and obedience to *sharīʻa,* is established. From their perspective, political Islam is a religio-political project that attempts to enable Islam not only to be represented in the state but also to be established as a comprehensive system that regulates all aspects of life. It is thus understood as a form of interaction between religion and politics. As a matter of fact, political Islam has manifested itself in many ways, ranging from the assertion of parochial identity to a full-blooded attempt to reconstruct society based on Islamic principles.[31]

Political Islam is a contemporary phenomenon in the Muslim world. It began as a movement of thought introduced by Ḥasan al-Banna (1906-1948), the founding father of Ikhwān al-Muslimīn (Muslim Brotherhood) in Egypt, and by Abul Aʻla al-Mawdudi (1903-1978), the founder of Jamaʻat-i Islami (Islamic Community) of Pakistan.[32] These two leaders endeavoured to define Islam primarily as a political system, in keeping with the major ideologies of the twentieth century. Their ideas have evolved into diverse movements that, during the last decades, have mounted challenges to both Western domination and regimes in the Muslim world. These challenges arose as a repercussion of the failure of ruling regimes in most Muslim countries to follow the development models of their Western allies, which was particularly triggered by the defeat of the combined Arab forces in the 1967 Arab-Israel War. Following this defeat many people in the Muslim world began to reexamine and question their lot.

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[30] See Robert W. Hefner, 'Islamization and Democratization in Indonesia', in Robert W. Hefner and Patricia Horvatich (eds.), *Islam in an Era of Nation-States* (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), pp. 75-206; Anders Uhlin, *Indonesia and the 'Third Wave of Democratization': The Indonesian Pro-Democracy Movement in a Changing World* (London: Curzon, 1997), and Taufik Abdullah, *Jalan Baru Islam: Memetakan Paradigma Mutakhir Islam Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1998).

[31] For a detailed discussion about this concept, see Nazih Ayubi, *Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Arab World* (London: Routledge, 1991). For a comparison, see Bruce B. Lawrence, *Defenders of God: The Fundamentalist Revolt Against the Modern Age* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995); and Ahmad S. Moussalli (ed.), *Islamic Fundamentalism: Myths and Realities* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998).

[32] The main reference work on the Egyptian Ikhwān al-Muslimīn is R.P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); and on the Jamaʻat-i Islami is Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1994).

Against this backdrop the slogan 'Islam is the solution' was born and gained grounds.[33]

The crucial event in the eruption of political Islam was the urban insurrection known as the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Not only did it exert powerful influence on other Islamic insurgencies, it thoroughly transformed Muslim imagination regarding what was politically possible using an innovative Islamic discourse articulated, in this case, by Ayatollah Khomeini. Observing developments in the Muslim world in the decades that followed, John L. Esposito wrote in 1992:

> Islamic revivalism has ceased to be restricted to small, marginal organizations on the periphery of society and instead has become part of mainstream Muslim society, producing a new class of modern-educated but Islamically oriented elites who work alongside, and at times in coalitions with, their secular counterparts. It is a vibrant, multifaceted movement that will embody the major impact of Islamic revivalism for the foreseeable future. Its goal is the transformation by individuals at the grass-roots level.[34]

The central questions to be raised here are why political Islam, which took the form of violence, erupted and gained ground in Indonesia after the collapse of the New Order regime? How did this phenomenon achieve prominence and what factors contributed to its proliferation? To what extent did it represent resentment triggered by the politico-economic crisis following the regime's collapse? Can it be interpreted simply as a protest action by certain groups who intend to lend their energies to the political interests of a few elites (and, if so, are its attributes specific to the ensuing transitional context)? To what extent can it be connected to the *longue durée* dynamics of the relationship between Islam and the state? And in what way has it to do with the global increase in anti-West sentiment that culminated in the 11 September attacks?

Without neglecting all possibilities, the fact that these groups got noticed within a transitional context needs to be specifically underscored. Gillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter (1986) have argued that transition is the period in which regimented relations in the society become blurred and uncertain, because the hegemonic discourse controlled by the state has undergone disarticulation. Many possibilities may be on the horizon, including the emergence of a chaotic situation that paves the way for the return of authoritarian rule. Even if democracy is to some extent manifested, it is frequently followed by uncertainty, since the rules of the game continue to

[33] See Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). See also Michael Gilsenan, *Recognizing Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1990).

[34] John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 23.

change. The players in the era of transition do not strive simply for their temporary political interests but also to establish control over the state. Within this context, transition, as the two political theorists put it, often stimulates the formation of a coalitional structure linking 'exemplary individuals' to societal organizations representing the masses.[35]

Given the transitional context of the surfacing of these groups, there is almost a consensus among Indonesian observers and analysts that this phenomenon constitutes a distinctively Indonesian form of political syndicalism associated exclusively with the manoeuvres of a dominant elite faction eager to protect its political interests in face of opposition. To them, the groups served merely as tools in the hands of unscrupulous political manipulators. Of course, these speculations cannot be overlooked and, as I shall demonstrate, there are more than enough facts that confirm their plausibility. Yet one should note that understanding this complicated issue solely on the basis of such a conspiracy theory is not sufficient to uncover the roots of the problem. The same holds true for any uncritical observation that sees the proliferation of these groups as an extension of the expansion of global terrorism. Such an observation tends to overlook the internal dynamism of the groups in relation to domestic political, social and cultural changes. One thing is indisputable: this phenomenon should be analysed within a broad context combining historical, theological, sociological and political approaches.

The Focus of the Study

This study focuses on Laskar Jihad. The choice was based on the fact that Laskar Jihad emerged as an unequivocally militant Islamic group, overwhelming much of the country by the willingness of its members to martyr themselves for God. Because of its pioneering calls for jihad in the Moluccas, it has become the most prominent face of Islamic militancy in post-New Order Indonesia. People were particularly astonished to witness the ranks of young men stating their determination to carry out armed jihad at all costs. This image was reinforced by the readiness of the group to enforce the *rajm* sentence at a time when other existing Islamist groups were still preoccupied with the more general discourse about the need for a comprehensive implementation of *sharīʻa*. For the same reason it came under closer scrutiny by the international community. Evidence of links to the Taliban has raised questions regarding possible ties to al Qaeda.

Furthermore, the attraction of Laskar Jihad is rooted in its ties to the Salafi *daʻwa* movement, which had previously developed a 'non-political'

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[35] Gillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1986), pp. 48-56; cf. Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

stance concerned primarily with the purity of *tawḥīd* and the subsequent moral integrity of individuals. Because of their concern with these two issues, it emerged as an exclusive, marginal movement in opposition to all other Islamist groups it accused of being trapped in *ḥizbiyya* (political) tendencies that brought about infidelity. Using the label *ahlus sunnah wal jama'ah* (Ar. *ahl al-Sunna wa'l jamā'a*)—which in the Indonesian context tends to denote traditionalism—it even challenged all kinds of mainstream interpretation of Islam. Its ideology was instead staunchly conservative, as reflected in its views on women, democracy and the West. Only after the collapse of the New Order regime did the political nuance of this group become visible.

What seems particularly intriguing is that in perpetrating its actions Laskar Jihad was driven by a firm belief in a worldwide conspiracy led by the United States to undermine Islam and the Muslim *umma*. The battle cry of this group is full of such an anti-American discourse that accuses Zionist and Christian forces of responsibility for US foreign policies. From its members perspective, Muslims are clearly victims of a global conspiracy. They claimed to be the only force acting to achieve the freedom of Muslims from intimidation and colonization. Here their identity as Salafis is given emphasis as a group that consistently follows the Qur'an and Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad, adheres to religious beliefs and practices and is free from corruption and the strains of Western culture.

Focusing on Laskar Jihad, this study looks at the origins and anatomy of a radical Islamist group and the process of its emergence in the political arena of Indonesia. In understanding the dynamics of this group, it is important to look beyond the immediacy of events to the historical context of its proliferation. This historical assessment provides a perspective on how political Islam has developed, employed strategies, and negotiated power. Nevertheless, to understand this phenomenon, we cannot simply examine the dynamics of domestic politics, which has so far dominated the scholarly debates of political Islam in Indonesia. This phenomenon has likewise been determined by the global constellations. As I shall demonstrate in this study, domestic politics has been interwoven with global Muslim politics.

Particular attention is devoted to how the quest for recognition has determined the evolution of the Salafis from a quietist community to their emergence as a paramilitary group. Within the framework of an identity-oriented paradigm, special importance is attached to the process of identity formation in the movement. The concern here is not simply the interests, motivations and characteristics shared by the members of the movement, but also how group identity is developed, communicated and integrated in a given socio-cultural context. The key to understanding the intricate and intersecting relationships between these variables lies in the dynamics of the competition for the interpretation of religious symbols and institutions which control them. An understanding of this process provides the foundation for an analysis of the

factors that might have contributed to the Salafi community resorting to militancy and violence.

Within the framework of social movement theory, which I shall elaborate on later, this study specifically analyses the process of how a social movement emerges. The benefit of this theory lies particularly in its capacity to provide—on the basis of a rational choice paradigm—insights to the interests of actors and how they mobilized resources. This theory has begun to gain wide acceptance among political Islam scholars who want to account for the mobilization dynamics around Islamic activism.[36] Certainly, the transitional context following the collapse of the New Order regime is taken as a starting-point in order to look thoroughly at the meanings of their action. Attention is paid to systematic opportunities and constraints within which their actions take place. The significance of the pre-existing social informal network is underscored to indicate that mobilization does not work in a vacuum but rather through interaction among individuals. However, the role of ideas in the formation of collective actions is not neglected. This study also deals with how actors frame their activism in an interpretative scheme in order to recruit people, win support and enhance the credibility of the movement.

Besides trying to answer the question of *how* a radical Islamist group emerged and developed, this study seeks to deal with the question of *why* such a group was formed and maintained. For this purpose, this study attempts to understand to what extent the ideological factors have played a role in directing the activism and formation of Laskar Jihad. The basic doctrine in the Salafi movement and its connection to twentieth-century Islamist ideologues are discussed to discover underlying doctrines of this group. This study also examines how the conservative doctrine of the Salafi movement provided the foundation to attract thousands of young people to support calls for jihad in the Moluccas. Understanding this helps explain why ideology is so crucial to a social movement.

In addition, this study seeks to expose the sociological aspects that successfully encourage young people to offer their lives by enthusiastically joining Laskar Jihad and going to what they call the battlefield of jihad in the Moluccas. If this is to be done properly, it is necessary to expose as sharply as possible the social composition of the group and the process that led individual members to join. Social composition is useful in identifying social problems that might have contributed to the formation of a radical Islamist group. Social changes arising from the rapid modernization and globalization of the last few decades will be given particular attention in order to connect the issue under consideration to a broader sociological debate.

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[36] Quintan Wiktorowicz (ed.), *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004), see also Quintan Wiktorowicz, 'Conceptualizing Islamic Activism', *ISIM Newsletter* 14 (June 2004), pp. 34-5.

Using the case of Indonesia, an area that has been relatively neglected, this study sets out to contribute to scholarly debates about political Islam. Based on data gathered through extensive fieldwork, complemented by theoretical assessments, this study provides an empirically rich analysis of how political Islam takes form and emerges in a given society and period of time. Its main contribution lies in its attempt to link research on this issue to broader social movement theory. The fact that very few studies attempt to do this leaves Islamic movements isolated from the plethora of theoretical developments in social movement theory. At the same time, this study tries to provide new ground for the enrichment of social movement theory and to shift the focus of Islamic movement research from ideology to issues of organization.

Methodological Notes

This study combines theoretical and empirical investigations. The sources for these investigations are collected through bibliographical study and fieldwork. The bibliographical study is carried out by surveying a number of relevant libraries and research institutes from which books, articles, academic theses and research reports containing early findings are acquired. The bibliographical study is completed by exploring relevant documentation and media, particularly newspapers, magazines and the Internet. Of particular importance are publications issued by Laskar Jihad itself, which include books, magazines, pamphlets and internal documents. A discourse analysis of speeches, informal talks and public sermons by Laskar Jihad leaders, some of which have been recorded on cassette, also forms a crucial part of this exercise.

The main sources of this study are two stints of intensive fieldwork that took place over a period of eighteen months. A number of cities were visited, including Jakarta, Bandung, Cirebon, Semarang, Salatiga, Solo, Yogyakarta, Surabaya and Makassar. The main headquarters of Laskar Jihad and its provincial and district branches became the main focus of attention. These visits afforded opportunities to conduct surveys and record participant observations. By first explicitly explaining my position as a researcher, I engaged in in-depth interviews and informal conversations with group leaders, activists, members, sympathizers and other social actors linked to this group. Observation was not always easy, as group members felt uneasy about outsiders and were suspicious of a ‘possible hidden agenda’ behind the study. However, ‘listening’ to them and participating in their collective prayers and religious gatherings helped to overcome these obstacles. Attention was also paid to the main areas of concentration of the Salafis. Observation of these areas was particularly useful in understanding the daily social lives of the Salafis.

To choose respondents, a random sampling technique was applied. More than one hundred Laskar Jihad members chosen randomly were interviewed. In order to avoid any bias, the distribution of respondents according to area, age, social background and position in the organization was taken into account.

These interviews aimed to gather information of the group's history, composition, structure and forms of action. As action is a process whose meanings are constructed through interaction, the actors themselves were not the objects of analysis; rather, they produced the object of analysis and supplied its meaning. The life-history technique was also involved to learn about the experiences of individual members before joining Laskar Jihad. This is particularly crucial in exploring the social composition of the group and the factors that encouraged individual members to engage in jihad in the Moluccas.

Ambon was also visited to observe the presence of Laskar Jihad in its main zone of jihad operation in the Moluccas. Observation took place around its headquarters and other places which preserve the footprints of this group. This observation was conducted to observe the social settings of the Laskar Jihad operation in the Moluccas and its interactions with local Muslims so that a better understanding about the meaning behind the engagement of this group in the Moluccan conflict can be achieved. Relevant facts were gathered through Laskar Jihad fighters, common people, local militia members and leaders of Muslim and Christian communities.

A number of relevant institutions and organizations were visited to discover the relationships between Laskar Jihad and other Islamic groups. These included LIPIA and Middle Eastern foundations or their local collaborators operating in Jakarta, including Hai'at al-Ighātha li'l ʻĀlam al-Islāmī, Ḥaramayn, Ihyā' al-Turāth al-Islāmī and al-Sofwa. To complete the observations, visits were made to a number of Muslim organizations and university-based Islamic associations, notably Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, al-Irsyad, Persis, Muhammadiyah, the Salahuddin Community of the Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, the Salman Mosque of the Institute of Technology in Bandung and the Campus *Daʻwa* Council of the Hasanuddin University in Makassar.

The Structure of the Book

This book consists of eight chapters. Chapter I is an introduction that explains its background, research questions, aims, focus, methodology and structure. An overview of the three major paramilitary groups is provided to discern their similarities and differences and Laskar Jihad's position among them. This overview also provides a guide to consider this phenomenon within the larger framework of political Islam. Some theoretical considerations are included to demonstrate the direction of the examination and analysis.

Chapter II deals with the origin of Laskar Jihad and its relations with the Salafi movement, which began to develop in the mid-1980s. Attention is devoted to the movement's expansion, the factors that fueled it, the dynamics of state-Islam relations that formed its domestic context and developments and dynamics at the transnational level that help determine Muslim politics at the local level. Subsequently, this chapter examines the issues of agency and

strategy in establishing an exclusive current of Islamic activism attracting many followers among university students and people outside the campus domains.

Chapter III discusses the role of Ja'far Umar Thalib, the founder of Laskar Jihad. His background, engagement in and influence on the movement are examined. Thus this chapter seeks to reveal the background of a radical Islamist leader by considering his personal experience, ethnicity and social network. His participation in jihad in Afghanistan and seeking of religious knowledge in the Middle East are explored. This chapter analyses his attempt to position himself as the movement's leading 'sacred' authority by using the *Surūriyya* issue, which was related to the repudiation by Ikhwān al-Muslimīn activists of the presence of American troops on Saudi Arabian soil following Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Finally, this chapter addresses how competition for the sacred authority gave birth to an informal social network, Ihyaus Sunnah, which later evolved into FKAWJ.

Chapter IV deals with the transformation of Ihyaus Sunnah into the Laskar Jihad paramilitary group, beginning with a discussion about social movement theories through which the transformation can be understood. The complexity of the transitional situation following the collapse of the New Order regime is described in order to show the context that enabled such a transformation to take place. Laskar Jihad's emergence was directly connected to the escalation of the Moluccan conflict, therefore, an analysis is also included to understand how the conflict provided the arena conducive to Laskar Jihad's actions. The construction of frame action by Laskar Jihad to launch its jihad mission in the Moluccas and how this was connected to much broader national and international issues is explored. As Laskar Jihad received legitimacy for its actions from the *fatwās* (religious decrees) of the Middle Eastern *'ulamā'*, the significance of these *fatwās* for the formation of the group is also examined. No less significant, this chapter examines the role of the pre-existing network in determining the direction of the movement.

Chapter V expounds the ideology of the Salafi movement and how this ideology contributed to the success of Laskar Jihad in calling for jihad in the Moluccas. In order to understand this issue, the basic doctrinal position of the movement, which is predicated upon a return to the Qur'an and the Sunna, is first examined. Subsequently, the chapter looks at how such belief led the movement to position *tawḥīd* as the means through which to understand the world. What seems intriguing in this context is how this particular world-view was kept away from its natural political contents, which generated an ideology that seems at a glance apolitical and non-revolutionary. Finally, this chapter looks at how this 'apolitical ideology' shifted and provided the foundation for Laskar Jihad.

Chapter VI explores the sociology of Laskar Jihad, beginning with an examination of the group's social composition. Particular attention is devoted to the cadres and masses who formed the backbone of the Laskar Jihad mission in

the Moluccas. The social, educational, and economic background of these people are examined to reveal the social roots that encouraged their engagement. Within this context, the processes of rapid modernization and globalization, which often present paradoxes to the large section of the population increasingly marginalized by them, are analysed. This chapter finally examines how these people try to solve problems posed by their position in these processes.

Chapter VII analyses the jihad actions of Laskar Jihad in the Moluccas and the meaning behind these actions in relation to the group's struggle to negotiate its identity. The arrival in the islands of thousands of Laskar Jihad members is explored to demonstrate that the group's success depended on the significant support of external powers. An analysis of this group's role in the Moluccan conflict is also provided. No less important are the tactics employed to conduct its jihad actions and reach its strategic goals. Further, this chapter examines the political constellation that changed the direction and sustainability of the group's actions. Problems that accompanied the presence of Laskar Jihad in the Moluccas in the aftermath of the 11 September tragedy are also explored. The chapter ends with an analysis of the group's disbanding.

Chapter VIII summarizes the study's conclusions.

CHAPTER II

THE EXPANSION OF 'SALAFIS' AND THE ZEAL OF ISLAMIC RESURGENCE

The origins of Laskar Jihad can be traced back to the mid-1980s, when the expansion of the Salafi communities was becoming visible and assertive. Signs of this expansion were first and foremost strikingly seen in the appearance of young men wearing long flowing robes (*jalabiyya*), turbans (*'imāma*), trousers right to their ankles (*isbāl*) and long beards (*liḥya*), and women wearing a form of enveloping black veil (*niqāb*) in public places. These people were inclined to stand distinctly apart from the 'anything goes' open society around them, by organizing themselves into small tight-knit communities. They appeared enthusiastic to revive and imitate the exemplary pattern set by the Prophet Muhammad and the first generation of his followers, which is perceived as pristine, ideal Islam. They sought to offer an alternative model of society, which is distinctly different from the modern Western model and intended to counter what is perceived as rampant Westernization.

The efflorescence of the Salafi communities has marked a new trend in Islamic activism in Indonesia. Even while displaying their distinctive identity, these communities adopted a stance of apolitical quietism.[1] Their main concern embraces the question of the purity of *tawḥīd* and a number of other issues centred on the call for a return to strict religious practice and an emphasis on

[1] The prototype of the communities to a large extent resembles what Olivier Roy (1996) refers to as neo-fundamentalism, which he defines as a non-revolutionary Islamic movement attempting to re-Islamize society at the grassroots level without being formed within an Islamic state. In his analysis, this phenomenon arose from of the failure of Islamism, a modern political Islamic movement that claims to re-create a true Muslim society by creating a new Islamic order through revolutionary and militant political action. See Oliver Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, translated by Carol Volk (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 25; cf. Gilles Kepel, *La Revanche de Dieu: chretients, juifs et musulmans a la reconquete du monde* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1991). Despite its strengths in offering insight through which to understand the late-twentieth-century evolution of political Islam, this theory has been criticized. In reality, political Islamic movements have never undergone a profound transformation from revolutionary to social modes of action. Both tendencies have constantly coexisted and the choice of a certain mode has greatly been determined by political constraints. See Francois Burgat, *Face to Face with Political Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), pp. 54-7.

individual moral integrity. Trivial, superficial issues, such as *jalabiyya*, *'imāma, liḥya*, *isbāl* and *niqāb*, have constituted the main themes in their day-to-day discussions. A commitment to wear the *jalabiyya* by men and the *niqāb* by women, for instance, has been viewed much more important than taking part in political activities. They believe that Muslim society must first be Islamized through a gradual evolutionary process that includes education (*tarbiya*) and purification (*taṣfiya*) before the comprehensive implementation of *sharī'a* can be realized. To reach this end, they have been fervently committed to *da'wa* activities (from the Arabic root *da'ā*, to call, which generally refers to the proselytizing that is incumbent upon every Muslim), participating in the establishment of *halqas* and *dauras*.[2]

There is no doubt that the phenomenon under discussion developed as the consequence of the expansion of the worldwide contemporary Salafi *da'wa* movement adopting the most puritanical sect of Islam, Wahhabism. This designation may cause some confusion, as in older academic parlance, Wahhabism is usually distinguished from Salafism. It is a term that denotes the reformist notions developed by Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb (1703-1792), who drew inspiration from the teachings of Taqiy al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328). This medieval thinker was a follower of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 850), the founder of Hanbalism, the strictest of the four legal schools of Sunni Islam.[3] The reformist notions of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb first developed into concrete form in the eighteenth century as a movement that set out to fight the superstitions and sufi devotional practices prevalent in Arab society, which were blamed to be parts of *bid'a* (unwholesome innovations), and to attack those who claimed to be Muslim but whose behaviour was considered un-Islamic. This movement took a hard line in defining who could be regarded as a believer, stating that no deviation from *sharī'a* was permitted, and it drew a firm distinction between the world of believers and that of unbelievers. At the same time, it strongly rejected *taqlīd* (blind imitation of medieval scholarly authorities), by establishing the Qur'an and the Sunna as the two fundamental and binding sources of Islamic faith and law. It is no exaggeration that John O. Voll (1994) considers this movement a 'prototype of rigorous fundamentalism in the modern Islamic experience'.[4]

What is generally known as Salafism arose nearly one century after Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb had succeeded in exerting his influence

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[2] *Halqa*, literally meaning 'circle', is a forum for the study of Islamic sciences, in which an *ustāz*, a teacher or preacher, gives lessons on the basis of certain books and his participants sit around him to hear and scrutinize his lessons. It is distinct from *daura*, literally meaning 'turn', which is a type of workshop held for a period ranging from one week to one month, during which its participants gather and stay in one place and follow all the designed programs.

[3] For a detailed discussion about this figure, see Samira Haj, 'Reordering Islamic Orthodoxy: Muhammad ibn 'Abdul Wahab', *The Muslim World* 92: 3-4 (2002), pp. 333-70.

[4] John O. Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World,* second edition (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), pp. 53-6.

throughout the Arabian Peninsula. It is identical to the reformist, modernist notions disseminated by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838-1898), Muḥammad ʻAbduh (1849-1905), and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935). Unlike their predecessors, these thinkers did not content themselves with appealing to Muslims to purify Islam of all kinds of *bid'a* and *taqlīd*, they also advocated a synthesis of Islam and modern, Western-style scientific rationalization, as appeared in their calls for opening the doors of *ijtihād* (independent reasoning). This synthesis was believed to be a necessity were the lost triumph of Islam to be regained. The spirit of wanting to combine Islam and modern science provided the basis for modernism in Islam, one that was significantly distinguishable from Wahhabism. Since the growth of Salafism went hand-in-hand with the rise of Muslim political consciousness in the face of Western colonization, an obsession with the reconstruction of the Muslim *umma* and the Islamic caliphate was inherent to this movement and left its mark on the dynamics of Muslim politics throughout the twentieth century.[5]

The contemporary Salafi movement can be called a form of reconstituted Wahhabism, owing to the determination of its proponents to more systematically introduce the thoughts formulated by the three main classical references among Wahhabis, namely Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya, Muḥammad ibn Qayyīm al-Jawziyya (1292-1350) and Muḥammad ibn ʻAbd al-Wahhāb. Also, followers often refer to the *fatwās* issued by contemporary Wahhabi authorities, such as ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz ʻAbd Allāh bin Bāz (d. 1999) and Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī (d. 1999). Being firmly associated with the global Islamic resurgence, nevertheless, this movement also inherited some aspects of Salafism, notably its anti-West sentiments, which inspired the birth of twentieth-century Islamist movements, such as Ikhwān al-Muslimīn and Jamaʻat-i Islami.

It seems appropriate to examine how the contemporary Salafi *daʻwa* movement has developed in Indonesia and formed an exclusive current of Islamic activism. What factors have contributed to its proliferation?

Islamic Reform in Indonesia

In terms of its desire for a return to pristine Islam, the contemporary Salafi movement is by no means new. Although Indonesia is located on the periphery of the Muslim world, it has witnessed the expansion of reformist notions since the first half of the nineteenth century, dramatically marked by the irruption of the Padri movement in West Sumatra.[6] This movement had been brought back to by Indonesians who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hājis*), as it indubitably

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[5] On the evolution of Islamic modernism, see Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[6] As for this movement, see Christine Dobbin, *Islamic Revivalism in a Changing Peasant Economy, Central Sumatra, 1784-1847* (London and Malmo: Curzon Press and Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies, 1983).

represents an incursion of Saudi Arabian Islam into Indonesia. The ideas of Islamic reform later became more clearly articulated with the spread of the Salafism of Muḥammad 'Abduh and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā. These developments gave rise to a number of Muslim reformist, modernist organizations, including the Muhammadiyah, al-Irsyad and Persis in the first quarter of the twentieth century. These movements championed the calls for a return to the Qur'an and the Sunna and a detachment from various traditional practices deemed to be tainted with *bid'a, takhayyul* (superstitions) and *khurafa* (myths).[7] Alongside this campaign, they laid the foundation for the younger generation by developing Western-style schools and encouraged the teaching of modern subjects.

The emergence of the reformist, modernist organizations challenged the traditional *'ulamā'* monopoly on the religious corpus. It is therefore understandable that leading *kyais*, traditional *'ulamā',* in Java responded to the expansion by spearheading the establishment of the Nahdlatul Ulama in 1926.[8] They were undeniably influential figures among traditionalist, conservative Muslims, whose affiliation with one school of Islamic law, *madhhab,* particularly the Shafi'ite, was fundamental. The *kyais* were the main points of reference, imbued with legitimacy as the interpreters of the *madhhab* doctrines, and their mastery of the *kitab kuning* (yellow books, referring to classical and medieval Arabic texts) provided the foundation of their authority. The position of the *kyais* was usually supported by the presence of the *pesantrens*, rural-based Islamic learning centres where students studied Arabic and Islamic subjects using the *kitab kuning*. In many instances, the *pesantren* appeared to represent an exemplary Islamic centre with the *kyai* as its central figure who usually enjoyed the respect and loyalty of his disciples and the other people surrounding him.[9]

The fragmentation of religious authority that ineluctably arose from the expansion of the reformist, modernist organizations imparted a striking character to the immense and complex diversity of Indonesian Islam. It is relevant in this

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[7] Although there are many books dealing with the emergence of these Muslim modernist movements, the pioneering study made by Deliar Noer remains important. See Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1942* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1973). On the transformation of Islamic modernism from the Middle East to Indonesia, see Michael F. Laffan, *Islamic Nationhood and Colonial Indonesia: the Umma Below the Winds* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003).

[8] Concerning this organization, see Martin van Bruinessen, *NU: Tradisi, Relasi-relasi Kuasa, Pencarian Wacana Baru* (Yogyakarta: LKIS, 1994); see also Greg Barton and Greg Fealy (eds.), *Nahdlatul Ulama, Traditional Islam and Modernity in Indonesia* (Monash: Monash Asia Institute, 1996).

[9] For a further account on the *kyai* and the *pesantren*, see Zamakhsyari Dhofier, *The Pesantren Tradition: The Role of the Kyai in the Maintenance of Traditional Islam in Java* (Arizona: Arizona State University, 1999). On the *kitab kuning*, see Martin van Bruinessen, 'Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script Used in the Pesantren Milieu', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde,* 146 (1990), pp. 226-69.

context to mention the concept introduced by the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1960), who divides Javanese society, the majority of Indonesian Muslims, into *santri, abangan* and *priyayi*.[10] The term *santri* is attributed to puritanical Muslims committed to a more or less normative profession of the faith, as opposed to the *abangan,* nominal Muslims, who felt comfortable with local customs influenced by Animism, Hinduism and Buddhism. The term *priyayi* refers to aristocratic bureaucrats of the Javanese courts, the bearers of the mystical court traditions, who, in the Geertzian paradigm, are close to the *abangan*. Some scholars have criticized this theory. They focus on the fact that while the first two categories are based on a personal commitment to Islamic doctrines, the last denotes a separate hierarchically determined social group that can be contrasted only with the common people. Accordingly, the basic division into the *santri* and *abangan* can also be applied to the *priyayi* group.[11]

It is the *santri's* concern with the formal, orthodox variant of Islam that, Geertz argues, contrasts them to the *abangan,* who are devoted to the communal feasts that revolve around *slametan.* In a *slametan*, which constitutes the core of *abangan* ritual practice, all kinds of invisible beings are invited to sit together with the other participants and share the same food.[12] For the *santri* the belief in the presence of invisible beings in this ritual represents the profound influences of Hinduism and Buddhism still present that should be eliminated. The criticism of the prevailing religious syncretism eventually led to a split within the ranks of the *santri* themselves, which Geertz categorizes as *kolot* and *moderen*. These are in fact identical to the traditionalists and modernists, respectively. The *kolot* are more willing to allow some non-Islamic rites a minor place in their religious observance, while the *moderen* work assiduously to expunge non-Islamic elements completely in favour of a purified Islam. Having made the above distinction, Geertz asserts that it is no accident that the *kolot* are closer to the *abangan*.[13] It should be noted that despite the tireless efforts of the *santri* to convince them to conform to formal Islam, even today the *abangan* probably form the majority of the population. Consequently, the discourse on Islamization

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[10] Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1960). For a comparison, see Mark R. Woodward, *Islam in Java: Normative Piety and Mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta* (Tucson: Association for Asian Studies, 1989).

[11] For the criticism of this theory, see Koentjaraningrat, 'Review of Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (New York, 1960)', *Madjalah Ilmu-Ilmu Sastra Indonesia*, 1 (1961), pp. 188-92; Mitsuo Nakamura, *The Crescent Arises over the Banyan Tree: A Study of the Muhammadiyah Movement in a Javanese Town* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1983), pp. 12-3; Zaini Muchtarom, *Santri dan Abangan di Jawa* (Jakarta: INIS, 1988); and Huub de Jonge, 'Western and Indonesian Views on the Abangan-Santri Division in Javanese Society: the Perception of Geertz's "The Religion of Java"', in Henk Driessen (ed.), *The Politics of Ethnographic Reading and Writing: Confrontations of Western and Indigenous Views* (Saarbrücken: Fort Lauderdale, 1993), pp. 101-23.

[12] Geertz (1960), pp. 121-30.

[13] Ibid., pp. 149-50.

is not fading away and always provides grounds for argument. In fact, it is intensifying as Indonesia is increasingly integrated into the Muslim world.[14]

The inherently antagonistic relations between the *santri* and *abangan* are reflected in the historical records of Indonesian politics. At the dawn of the Indonesian nation-state, the Majelis Syura Muslimin Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Consultative Assembly, Masyumi) was set up by the Japanese occupation in 1943 in an effort to mobilize Muslim support.[15] In the run-up toward independence, this assembly spearheaded the struggle of Muslim leaders to implement what was later known as the Jakarta Charter as the foundation of the would-be Indonesian state. But their struggle ended in failure because of the opposition of secular *abangan* nationalists and like-minded leaders who preferred a secular republican model based on the Pancasila and the Constitution of 1945. As a result, many Muslim leaders felt betrayed.[16] During the final years of the Indonesian revolution, the first serious challenge to the Indonesian secular republican model emerged when Kartosuwirjo, as mentioned earlier, proclaimed an independent Islamic state in West Java. This rebellion was triggered by an unfavourable agreement made by the Soekarno government with the Dutch that forced all armed forces, including guerrilla groups, to withdraw to Central Java.[17]

The Masyumi that had transformed itself into a political party in the early years of independence underwent a fragmentation in 1952 when the Nahdlatul Ulama decided to become an independent political party. Both participated in the first general election in 1955, winning the second and third largest number of votes, respectively, after the Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Nationalist Party, PNI).[18] With this result, the Masyumi again tried to propose *sharīʻa* as the foundation of the state, but this attempt also failed because of the resolute rejection by secular nationalists, army technocrats and socialists who were all united in their opposition to any form of Islamic governance. Following an accusation of the involvement of some of its leaders in the largely Sumatran Pemerintahan Revolusioner Republik Indonesia

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[14] See Martin van Bruinessen, 'Global and Local in Indonesian Islam', *Southeast Asian Studies* 37: 2 (September 1999), pp. 158-175.

[15] The most comprehensive book dealing with this period remains Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation 1942-1945* (The Hague and Bandung: W. van Hoeve, 1958). For a comparison, see Benedict Anderson, *Some Aspects of Indonesian Politics under the Japanese Occupation: 1944-1945* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, 1961).

[16] In the Jakarta Charter there is a stipulation that requires Muslims to conform to *sharīʻa*, which would place the state unequivocally behind Islam. This stipulation was removed from the Pancasila, whose first principle simply contains the words 'Believe in One God (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*)'. The best reference for this issue is B.J. Bolland, *The Struggle of Islam in Modern Indonesia* (The Hague: Martinus Hijhoff, 1982).

[17] See Horikoshi (1975) and Van Dijk (1981).

[18] For more information about this election see Herbert Feith, *The Indonesian Politics of 1955* (Ithaca: Modern Indonesian Project, Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1971).

(Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia, PRRI) rebellion, the Masyumi was banned and expelled from the political arena of Indonesia in 1960.[19]

Saudi Arabian Geopolitics

The proliferation of the Salafi *da'wa* movement is inexorably associated with the rising influence of Saudi Arabia in the global politics of the Muslim world. As the place where Masjīd al-Ḥarām and Masjīd al-Nabawī, Two Holy Sanctuaries, are located, the Kingdom has constantly been obsessed by an attempt to place itself at the centre of the Muslim world, bolstered by its permanent position as *Khādim al-Ḥaramayn*, the guardian of the two holy sanctuaries. For this purpose, it forged an alliance with, and, to some extent, co-opted Wahhabism. In fact, what we can call the first Saudi Arabian state was born out of a sacred alliance between Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb and Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd (r. 1747-1765), a local prince in Nejd. Its existence was short-lived, as in 1819 this state was crushed by the Egyptian forces of the Ottoman Empire. Wahhabism remained marginalized until the rise of 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Sa'ūd (d. 1953) at the beginning of the twentieth century. He created a nation-state by relying on a combination of force and ideological mobilization based on Wahhabism.[20] In effect Wahhabism was enshrined as a state religion and the *'ulamā'* are *de facto* agents of the state who are always prepared to provide tacit approval and, when requested, public sanction for potentially controversial issues.[21]

'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Sa'ūd played an enormously important role in initiating an effort to place Saudi Arabia at the centre of the Muslim world and preparing the ground for the sustainability of this position. In the 1920s he organized the Muslim World Congress whose aim was to forge solidarity between Islamic countries. This congress was a tactical move to take the initiative in the development of pan-Islamic politics out of the hands of the Ottoman Empire, which was then embroiled in a political crisis.[22] After the Second World War, Saudi Arabia adopted the spreading of Wahhabism as a major plank in its foreign policy, particularly to counter the expansion of Arab Socialist Nationalism launched by the then President of Egypt, Gamal Abdel

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[19] On this rebellion, see James Mossman, *Rebels in Paradise: Indonesia's Civil War* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1961).

[20] Concerning the origins of Saudi rule, see James Piscatori, 'Ideological Politics in Sa`udi Arabia', in James Piscatori (ed.), *Islam in the Political Process* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 56-63. For a more comprehensive account, see Joseph Kostiner, *The Making of Saudi Arabia, 1916-1936: From Chieftaincy to Monarchical State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

[21] Joseph Nevo, 'Religion and National Identity in Saudi Arabia', *Middle Eastern Studies* 34: 3 (1998), p. 40.

[22] Concerning the politics of pan-Islam, see Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

Nasser. This policy brought the Kingdom into the Western bloc led by the United States, which was engaged in a Cold War with the Soviet Union-led communist bloc.[23] In 1957, Saudi Arabia sponsored the Organization of Islamic Conference, whose purpose was to formulate the foreign policy of the Muslim world. In addition, in 1962, it set up the Rābiṭat al-'Ālam al-Islāmī (the Muslim World League, RAI), which was responsible for the institutionalization of Saudi influence in cultural and religious activities all over the Muslim world.[24]

The rise of the Rābiṭat has contributed a great deal to the further spread of Saudi Arabian influence, which has steadily gained momentum since the beginning of the 1970s. This is related to the success of Saudi Arabia in gaining an increasingly crucial position in the Muslim world, particularly in Middle East, as a result of the defeat of Muslim countries in the 1967 Arab-Israel War.[25] This position became more crucial after world oil prices skyrocketed, which provided considerable economic benefits for the Kingdom.[26] To spread its influence, Saudi Arabia urged the Rābiṭat to take part as its philanthropic agent in the liberal distribution of money for the construction of mosques, Islamic schools and social facilities, as well as to fund *da'wa* activities for Islamic organizations all over the world.[27]

In tandem with the growth in Saudi Arabian influence, the Muslim world has witnessed the currents of Islamic resurgence marked by the proliferation of Islamist ideas developed by Sayyid Quṭb (1906-1966) and Abul A'la al-Mawdudi (1903-1979), ideologues of the Ikhwān al-Muslimīn and the Jama'at-i Islami, respectively. The ideological vacuum caused by the perceived failure of nationalist regimes following defeat in the 1967 war boosted the popularity of their notions. Alongside the slogan of 'Islam is the solution', the concept of *jāhiliyya*, introduced by Quṭb, quickly gained wide currency. This concept describes the situation of the Muslim world under the nationalist regimes as being in a state of ignorance and barbarism, and this undoubtedly provoked the consciousness of Islamists to resist the established order and devise actions that were aimed to overturn and transform it.[28]

Saudi Arabia played an important role in the consolidation of Islamist ideology. In the context of the fight against Nasser's Socialist Nationalism, the Kingdom provided a haven for Egyptian Ikhwān refugees who had escaped

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[23] Gilles Kepel, *Jihad, the Trail of Political Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), p. 46.

[24] On these two organizations, see Saad S. Khan, *Reasserting International Islam: A Focus on the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Other Islamic Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); see also Kepel (2002), pp. 72-5.

[25] Voll (1994), pp. 295-6; Kepel (2002), p. 69.

[26] Cary Fraser, 'In Defense of Allah's Realm: Religion and Statecraft in Saudi Foreign Policy Stategy,' in Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and James Piscatori (eds.), *Transnational Religion and Fading States* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1997), p. 222.

[27] Reinhard Schulze, *Islamischer Internationalismus in 20. Jahrhundert* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), pp. 215-216; see also Kepel (2002), p. 72.

[28] Ayubi (1991), p. 131.

arrest following Quṭb's execution in 1966. From Arabian soil, Islamist ideas were spread throughout the world. Consonant with its opposition to the revolutionary and anti-imperialist orientation of the Ikhwān al-Muslimīn, Saudi Arabia has favoured the non-revolutionary wing of this organization led by Ḥasan al-Hudaybi and 'Umar al-Talmasani. Both have rejected the *takfīr* doctrine (excommunicating the sovereign considered apostate) propounded by Quṭb and opted to pursue Islamization from below rather than embrace the revolutionary strategy of taking over power.[29] In addition, it has forged a close relationship with the Jama'at-i Islami, which has likewise rejected the revolutionary mode of politics while criticizing Western democracy.[30]

The role of Saudi Arabia in global politics faced a serious challenge when the Iranian Revolution erupted in 1979 and brought Ayatollah Khomeini to power. The success of this revolution provided a model, indeed, a veritable blueprint, for the establishment of an Islamic state that had long been dreamed of by Islamists all over the world.[31] Saudi Arabia was haunted by the speculation that such a revolution would possibly wipe out its own monarchy. This anxiety was to some extent justified when the Kingdom witnessed the seizure of the Grand Mosque of Mecca by a group of people led by Juhaymān al-'Utaiby in November 1979, which was followed by a series of Shi'ite demonstrations.[32] The challenge posed by the Iranian Revolution became more apparent when Khomeini proposed that Mecca and Medina be granted international status.[33] Saudi Arabia tried hard to limit the devastating effects of the revolution. At the domestic level it sought to prove its commitment to Islam by imposing a stricter enforcement of religious laws. At the international level it intensified the spread of Wahhabism, whose ideological elements contain anti-Shi'ite sentiments.[34]

The intensification of Wahhabi influence all over the world, which also means the expansion of non-revolutionary Islamic activism, can therefore be seen as a direct reaction to the success of the Iranian Revolution. This revolution did indeed awaken ruling regimes in the Muslim world to the threat of revolutionary Islamic activism that was developing within their respective territorial borders. Consequently, activists in Islamic political movements were

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[29] For these developments, see Gilles Kepel, *Prophet and Pharaoh: Muslim Extremism in Egypt*, trans. Jon Rothschild (London: Cornell University Press, 1985).

[30] S.V.R. Nasr, 'Islamic Opposition in the Political Process: Lessons from Pakistan', in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism or Reform* (Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997), p. 137.

[31] For a further account on this revolution, see Michael J. Fischer, *From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980). For a comparison see Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

[32] Regarding opposition movements in Saudi Arabia, see Mamoun Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissents* (London: McMillan, 1999).

[33] On the contestation between Iran and Saudi in post-Khomeini revolution, see Fraser (1997), pp. 226-234.

[34] See Stephen Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud from Tradition to Terror* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), pp. 148-49.

subjected to state repression and coercion used as weapons by respective regimes and this situation engendered frustration among the activists. Saudi Arabia utilized the strictures on the domain of Islamic political activism arising from this changing political realm as a space to further spread Wahhabism.

Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (DDII)

The inflow of Saudi Arabian influence has come to Indonesia mainly through Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia (Indonesian Council for Islamic Propagation, DDII), a *da'wa* organization set up by Muhammad Natsir and other former Masyumi leaders in 1967. The catalysts for the establishment of this organization were the various political impasses checkmating the former Masyumi leaders, particularly in relation to their demands for the rehabilitation of the Masyumi and the implementation of the Jakarta Charter. Soeharto, who came to power in place of Soekarno in 1966 following the alleged abortive coup of the Indonesian Communist Party, rejected the demands and resolutely implemented a strategy of development and modernization, and, consequently, preferred not to involve religion. This rejection marked the beginning of an era of marginalization of Muslim politics by Soeharto, reinforcing the policies of the preceding Soekarno regime.

It can be plausibly inferred that the decision of the former Masyumi leaders to establish DDII was a strategic choice to extricate themselves from the political impasse and, at the same time, avoid Soeharto's pressure.[35] DDII was initially concerned with the publication of a series of sermons and religious homilies. To negotiate smoothly with the Soeharto regime, which remained suspicious of it, DDII adopted various strategies. One was to mobilize religious preachers all over Indonesia to hear briefings by government officials about Soeharto's policies.[36] More important, DDII immediately associated itself with Saudi Arabia, which was engaged in a persistent battle against the remaining forces of Nasser's Socialist Nationalism. From its inception, it became the Indonesian representative of the Rābiṭat.[37] This linkage reinforced the very existence of DDII in the eyes of Soeharto, who was trying equally hard to eradicate the remaining forces of alleged communists. In the context of its campaign against communism, the New Order encouraged religious observance by requiring students at all levels of education to take courses in religious

[35] In relation to the establishment of this organization, Natsir has said, 'Previously we carried out *da'wa* through politics but now we run politics through *da'wa*'. See Muhammad Natsir, *Politik Melalui Jalur Dakwah* (Jakarta: Abadi, 1998), p. 22.

[36] Lukman Hakiem and Tamsil Linrung (eds.), *Menunaikan Panggilan Risalah: Dokumentasi Perjalanan 30 Tahun Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia* (Jakarta: DDII, , 1997), pp. 18-21.

[37] Schulze (1990), p. 260.

instruction. Paradoxically, while encouraging the promotion of personal piety, the New Order sought to increase its control of Islamic political expression.[38]

Having been endorsed in its position, DDII began to take on sensitive issues. Since the beginning of the 1970s, it has demonstrated its concern that Christianization is threatening the existence of Islam and the Muslim *umma* in Indonesia. The straw that broke the camels' back was the phenomenon of mass conversion to Christianity by former communists who were pursued by the military joining forces with activists from Muslim organizations. Missionary organizations, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, opened their doors for these political refuges.[39] Speculations then arose in DDII circles about the threat of the Christian domination of Indonesian politics. DDII believed that Ali Moertopo, the most trusted advisor of Soeharto who was often claimed to be the 'architect' of the New Order, worked hand-in-glove with a group of Chinese Roman Catholic political activists and intellectuals assembled in the Center of Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) to promote Christians to prominent positions in the military and civilian bureaucracy.[40]

Following the eruption of the global Islamic resurgence, DDII sought to popularize Islamist themes. Through the network of Muslim preachers and mosques, it spread the ideas of Ikhwān al-Muslimīn and Jama'at-i Islami, represented by the writings of such influential Islamist ideologues as Ḥasan al-Banna, Sayyid Quṭb, Sayyid Hawwā, Musṭafā al-Sibā'ī and Abul A'la al-Mawdudi. This propagation partly inspired the birth of a younger generation of radicalized militants unwilling to compromise with the state authority. Fuelled by the spirit of the global Islamic resurgence, DDII gradually dared to openly criticize the policies of the Soeharto regime, particularly through the pages of its daily, *Abadi*. Nevertheless, its ambition to enter the political arena was soon countered by an increasingly repressive policy pursued by Soeharto, congruent with New Order enmity towards political Islam. The organization felt its impact directly when *Abadi* was banned in 1974.

After the 1971 general election that gave an absolute victory to the ruling faction Golongan Karya (Functionalist Group, Golkar), Soeharto explicitly intensified the marginalization of political Islam by implementing the 'parties fusion' policy.[41] This policy obliged all Muslim parties to be fused into one, the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party, PPP), just

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[38] Ruth McVey, 'Faith as the Outsider: Islam in Indonesian Politics', in James P. Piscatori, *Islam in the Political Process* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 199-225.

[39] Robert W. Hefner, 'Print Islam: Mass Media and Ideological Rivalries among Indonesian Muslims', *Indonesia*, 64 (October 1997), pp. 83-4.

[40] Hamish McDonald, *Suharto's Indonesia* (Blackburn: Fontana/Collins, 1980), pp. 101-2.

[41] For a further account on the developments around this issue, see Abdul Aziz Thaba, *Islam dan Negara dalam Politik Order Baru* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1996). See also Martin van Bruinessen, 'Islamic State or State Islam? Fifty Years of State-Islam Relations in Indonesia', in Ingrid Wessel (ed.), *Indonesien Am Ende Des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg: Abera, 1996), pp. 19-34.

as the nationalist and Christian parties were fused into the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (Indonesian Democratic Party, PDI). To shore up this policy, Soeharto popularized development jargon and imposed the Pancasila. Any aspirations that challenged the Pancasila could be easily labelled either 'left extreme' or 'right extreme', for which the Anti-Subversive Act inherited from Soekarno was the chief government weapon. Through the indoctrination programme called the *Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila* (Guide to Comprehension and Practice of the Pancasila, P4), among other instruments, the Pancasila was systematically embedded in the minds of people. The spread of the Pancasila doctrine served as an isolating factor and constant possibility of surveillance, in Foucaultian terms, replacing the control of physical domination over the body.[42]

Resistance to this discouraging and distressing situation flared in the form of uprisings. A group called *Komando Jihad* (Jihad Command) led by Ismail Pranoto perpetrated terrorist acts; another led by Abdul Qadir Djaelani and calling itself 'Pola Perjuangan Revolusioner Islam' (the Model of Revolutionary Islamic Struggle) stormed the building of the People Consultative Council's Assembly. No less important was a series of murders and robberies committed by a group led by M. Warman (Warman terrors), and the attacks of an Imran M. Zein-led group on a number of government facilities that culminated in the hijacking of a Garuda Indonesia aeroplane on 28 March 1981. Led by West Javanese *Darul Islam* veterans who had initially been employed by Moertopo's intelligence operators to destroy communism, these groups acted for a common cause, namely, to revolt against Soeharto and establish an Islamic state.[43] Yet Soeharto remained undeterred and consistently wiped them out by force. Following the Tanjung Priok affair, which killed hundreds of people demonstrating to demand the release of their colleagues, Soeharto even applied the Mass Organization and Political Bill, which required all mass organizations and political parties to accept the Pancasila as the *asas tunggal* (the sole foundation) in 1985, thus forbidding Islam from being used as the basis for any organization.[44]

Soeharto's steadfast determination to marginalize Muslim politics and wipe out its radical expressions encouraged DDII to reaffirm its position as an exclusively *da'wa* movement. The change in the political map in the Middle East brought about by the success of the Iranian Revolution had a profound impact on the *da'wa* activities of DDII. As the primary agent of the campaign against Shi'ites in Indonesia,[45] it received more money from Saudi Arabia

[42] Micheal Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

[43] Santosa (1996), pp. 434-50. See also Martin van Bruinessen, 'Genealogies of Islamic Radicalism in Post-Suharto Indonesia', *South East Asian Research,* 10: 2 (2002), pp. 117-54.

[44] On the dynamics behind the acceptance of Muslims on the Pancasila, see Faisal Ismail, *Islam, Politics and Ideology in Indonesia: a Study of the Process of Muslim Acceptance of the Pancasila*, PhD Dissertation (Montreal: McGill University, 1995).

[45] Bruinessen (1999), p. 172.

through such channels as Hai'at al-Ighātha al-Islāmiyya al-'Ālamiyya (International Islamic Relief Organization, IIRO), al-Majlis al-'Ālam li'l-Masājid (World Council of Mosques, WCM), al-Nadwa al-'Ālamiyya li al-Shabāb al-Islāmī (World Assembly of Muslim Youth, WAMY) and Lajna Birr al-Islāmī (Committee of Islamic Charity, CIC). This considerable financial support significantly increased DDII activity in the *da'wa* and social fields, including construction of new mosques, orphanages and hospitals, the founding of Islamic schools, distribution of free copies of Qur'an and books, and preacher training. Within the framework of the Muslim preacher training project it entered into cooperation with the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (the Council of Indonesian *'Ulamā'*, MUI), a semi-governmental body that was in fact created by the New Order to domesticate the *'ulamā'* by launching a programme of *da'i transmigrasi,* preachers to be sent to remote transmigration areas.[46]

In order to maintain the sustainability of its voice in the public sphere, DDII explored international Islamic issues through its mouthpiece, the monthly *Media Dakwah*.[47] One of the most abrasive issues was anti-Zionism, which perceives a covert conspiracy by Jews planning to rule and dominate the world through capitalism, communism, democratization, authoritarianism, revolution and economic liberalization, and to be the source of all problems afflicting the Muslim *umma*.[48] DDII played a role in sponsoring the translation and spreading of a number of Arabic texts that are frequently referred to as *Al-Maqā'id al-Yahūdiyya* (the Protocol of the Elders of Zion) and that provide the putative grounds for pursuing the issue.

Its control over resources led DDII to assume a central position on the map of Islamic organizations in Indonesia. In negotiations for financial support, it served as a bridge between Saudi Arabia and a number of Muslim organizations, particularly those from the modernist end of the spectrum, such as Muhammadiyah, al-Irsyad and Persis. Indeed, to receive financial support from a generous donor within the Kingdom, an *ad hoc* association needed a recommendation (*tazkiya*) from the local office of the Rābiṭat.[49] Saudi Arabian support seemed significant in facilitating the *da'wa* activities of these organizations, which were also forced by the situation to reaffirm their positions as exclusively *da'wa* organizations. In spite of a great doctrinal difference, the

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[46] Hakiem and Linrung (1997), pp. 27-28.

[47] Concerning this periodical, see R. William Liddle, 'Media Dakwah Scripturalism: One Form of Islamic Political Thought and Action in New Order Indonesia', in Mark R. Woodward (ed.), *Toward A New Paradigm: Recent Developments in Indonesian Islamic Thought* (Arizona: Arizona State University, 1996), pp. 323-56.

[48] For a further account on anti-Zionist sentiments in Indonesia, see Martin van Bruinessen, 'Yahudi sebagai Simbol dan Wacana Pemikiran Islam Indonesia Masa Kini', in Ahmad Suaedy et al. (eds.), *Spiritualitas Baru: Agama dan Aspirasi Rakyat* (Yogyakarta: DIAN/Interfidei, 1994), pp. 253-268. See also James T. Siegel, '*Kiblat* and the Mediatic Jew', *Indonesia*, 69 (April 2000), pp. 9-40.

[49] Kepel (2002), p. 73.

same holds true for the traditionalist Nahdlatul Ulama. Middle Eastern financial aid especially flooded well-known *pesantrens* attached to the organization.[50] In addition, DDII became an important link in the distribution of grants provided by Saudi Arabia for Indonesian youths wanting to study Islam in Middle Eastern universities. Since 1975, DDII has received twenty-five grants every year to be distributed to all Muslim organizations.[51]

Islamic Activism on the Campus

The intensification of Islamic revitalization launched by DDII was felt most significantly on university campuses, which witnessed a rapid expansion of Islamic activism. On the basis of strategic considerations, DDII preferred university campuses as one of the most important *da'wa* targets. Muhammad Natsir has personally supported Imaduddin Abdurrachim, an activist of the Salman Mosque of the Institut Teknologi Bandung (Institute of Technology of Bandung, ITB), who has been appointed the general secretary of the Kuwait-based International Islamic Federation of Student Organizations (IIFSO), to develop the programme of the *Latihan Mujahid Dakwah* (Training of *Da'wa* Fighters), whose aim was to train new cadres among university students prepared to undertake *da'wa* activities.[52] This programme has provided a model for Islamic activism on the campus and facilitated the popularity of a variety of programmes for the study of Islam organized by religious activity units, such as *Mentoring Islam* (Islamic Courses) and *Studi Islam Terpadu* (Integrated Study of Islam).

To accelerate the spread of its influence, DDII sponsored projects for building mosques and Islamic centres in areas around twelve different universities, including the University of Indonesia in Jakarta, the Andalas University in Padang, the Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, the Eleventh March State University in Solo and the Diponegoro University in Semarang. These projects were known as 'Bina Masjid Kampus'.[53] In these Islamic centres the DDII cadres, who were usually Middle Eastern graduates, offered Islamic training programmes to university students and introduced them to the thinking of the main Islamist ideologues.

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[50] Interview with K.H. Irfan Zidni, Jakarta, July 2003.

[51] Interview with Misbach Malim, the head of secretariat bureau of DDII, February 2003.

[52] On the role played by Imaduddin Abdurrachim in the proliferation of *halqa*s and his closeness with Natsir, see Asna Husin, *Philosophical and Sociological Aspects of Da'wah: A Study of Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia*, PhD Dissertation (Columbia: Columbia University, 1988), p. 168. Concerning this training, see 'Gerakan Kaum Muda Islam Mesjid Salman', in Abdul Aziz, Imam Tholkhah, Soetarman (eds.), *Gerakan Islam Kontemporer di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1989), pp. 207-50.

[53] A complete list of the mosques and Islamic centers built by DDII in and around university campuses is available in Hakiem and Linrung (1997), p. 31; see also Husin (1998), pp. 171-2.

The implementation of a restrictive policy of the New Order in 1978, which prohibited university students from playing an active part in politics, known as Normalisasi Kehidupan Kampus/Badan Koordinasi Kampus (Normalization of Campus Policy-Campus Coordination Board, NKK-BKK), which was later strengthened by the enforcement of the *asas tunggal,* contributed to the acceleration of the spread of Islamic activism on the campus. As one of the remarkable consequences of this policy, student movements came to a standstill in organizing activities and voicing their political demands. Many of their proposed conferences and training programmes were refused permits by local police and military authorities. If any, their activities were no longer attractive to most students either because of strict censorship by the university authorities or self-censorship.[54]

The policy embittered all university student organizations. The Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (Muslim Student Association, HMI), the largest and oldest Muslim university student organization, was no exception. Although this organization supported New Order developmentalism, for which Nurcholis Madjid, its most prominent leader in the 1970s, introduced the idea of secularization,[55] many of its members grew highly frustrated by the state's repression of campus activism. Their frustration increased when they saw how HMI's Malaysian counterpart, the Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (Islamic Youth Movement of Malaysia, ABIM), was enjoying popular support in its advocacy of Islam as a comprehensive way of life.[56] Eventually, fragmentation occurred, generating a new HMI called the Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam-Majelis Penyelamat Organisasi (Muslim Student Association-the Assembly of the Saviour of the Organization, HMI-MPO).[57] This organization took the same position as several other Muslim student organizations, such as the Masyumi-affiliated Pelajar Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Students, PII), which fiercely rejected the Pancasila.

Soeharto's depoliticization of university campuses stimulated growing numbers of students to turn toward Islamic activism. This trend reached its pinnacle following the Iranian Revolution and the Saudi reaction to it. As a result, university campuses witnessed an Islamic resurgence marked by an increase in students' observation of their Islamic obligations, in their wearing of

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[54] For a detailed discussion, see Fauzie Ridjal and M. Rusli Karim (eds.), *Dinamika Budaya dan Politik dalam Pembangunan* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1991).

[55] On Nurcholis Madjid's notions on secularization, see M. Kamal Hassan, *Contemporary Muslim Religio-Political Thought in Indonesia: The Response to 'New Order Modernization',* PhD Dissertation, (Columbia: Columbia University, 1975), pp. 137-77.

[56] For a comparative study about these two movements, see M. Kamal Hassan, 'The Response of Muslim Youth Organizations to Political Change: HMI in Indonesia and ABIM in Malaysia', in R. William Roff (ed.), *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning: Comparative Studies of Muslim Discourse* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 180-96.

[57] Concerning the rise of this new HMI, see M. Rusli Karim, *HMI MPO: Dalam Kemelut Modernisasi Politik di Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1997), pp. 127-135.

the *jilbab,* and in the spread of Islamist books. Alongside the translations of the books by the Islamist theoreticians, those by Shi'ite ideologues, including Ayatollah Khomeini, Murthadha Muthahhari, and Ali Shariati, were circulated widely among university students. The rise of Islamic publishing houses, such as Gema Insani Press, Pustaka Mantiq, Hasanah Ilmu, Al-Kautsar, Risalah Gusti, Pustaka al-Ummah, Asasuddin Press and Tandhim Press, which were concerned with the publication and distribution of such books, accelerated the spread of their ideas. This situation undoubtedly provided a precondition for the growth of transnational Islamic movements, such as Ikhwān al-Muslimīn, Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr and Tablighi Jama'at (*Da'wa* Society).

Ikhwān al-Muslimīn was initially founded under the name *Harakah Tarbiyah*, meaning 'the movement for education', and developed under the guidance of prominent figures, some of whom graduated from al-Azhar and other Middle Eastern universities. Among them were Abu Ridho or Abdi Sumaiti and Rahmat Abdullah.[58] The movement grew by recruiting through a system of secret cells. Under this system, *halqas* and *dauras* were organized in members' houses and other closed venues, called *usrahs*. Every cell consisted of between ten to twenty members under the leadership of a *murabbi,* literally meaning 'instructor'.[59] Because of its secret nature, all cell members were encouraged to be active in advertising their main readers, such as *Ma'ālim fī'l-Ṭāriq* (Signposts on the Road) by Quṭb, to potential followers by word of mouth. Those interested were invited to attend the *halqas* and *dauras*. Once they decided to be members, they too were encouraged to approach potential followers and invite them to attend their activities. In a relatively short time, the movement was present in nearly all Indonesian universities and emerged as the strongest force of Islamic activism on the campus. Its widespread influence, in retrospect, provided the foundation for the Partai Keadilan (Justice Party), formed soon after the collapse of the New Order regime and later transformed into the Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (Prosperity and Justice Party), which won significant votes in the 2004 general elections.[60]

The Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr movement, established by Taqiy al-Dīn al-Nabhānī in Palestine in 1953 and introduced to Indonesia by 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-

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[58] See Abdul Aziz, 'Meraih Kesempatan Dalam Situasi Mengambang: Studi Kasus Kelompok Keagamaan Mahasiswa Universitas Indonesia', *Penamas: Jurnal Penelitian Agama dan Masyarakat*, 20: 7 (1995), pp. 7-10. On the role of Rahmat Abdullah and Abu Ridho in this movement, see 'Ikhwanul Muslimin: Inspirasi Gerakan Tarbiyah', *Suara Hidayatullah*, August 2001.

[59] Aziz (1995), pp. 7-8. See also Ali Said Damanik, *Fenomena Partai Keadilan: Transformasi 20 Tahun Gerakan Tarbiyah di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Teraju, 2002), pp. 88-93.

[60] On this party see Mathias Diederich, 'A Closer Look at *Dakwah* and Politics in Indonesia: The *Partai Keadilan*: Some Insights into its History and an Analysis of its Programs and Statutes', *Archipel* 64 (2002); Damanik (2002); and Elizabeth Fuller Collins, 'Islam is the Solution, Dakwah and Democracy in Indonesia', *Kultur, the Indonesian Journal for Muslim Cultures*, 3: 1 (2003), pp. 143-82.

Baghdādī, an activist from Australia, followed the initiative of Ikhwān al-Muslimīn on university campuses.[61] Also like Ikhwān al-Muslimīn, it used secret cells. But, in terms of ideology, Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr was more radical than Ikhwān al-Muslimīn, as it vigorously espoused the creation of a *khilāfa islāmiyya*, 'Islamic Caliphate'. To achieve this aim, it did not hesitate to use violent means. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Baghdādī initiated his efforts to propagate this movement when he was invited by Abdullah Nuh to his Pesantren Al-Ghazali, in Bogor, West Java. From this town he began promoting the ideologies of Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr by organizing *halqas* in al-Ghifari mosque located in the biggest university in Bogor, the Institut Pertanian Bogor (Institute for Agriculture of Bogor, IPB) and in a private university located in the same city, Universitas Ibnu Khaldun (Ibnu Khaldun University). The movement soon attracted a significant number of activists in the *Lembaga Dakwah Kampus* (University *Da'wa* Organization) of both universities. Through the *Lembaga Dakwah Kampus*, it spread to other universities, including Padjadjaran University in Bandung, Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Airlangga University in Surabaya, Brawijaya University in Malang and Hasanuddin University in Makassar.[62] Later, it openly proclaimed its existence in the post-New Order Indonesian public sphere by calling itself Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia. But it viewed the existing political system as illegitimate and refused to participate in the general elections.

Tablighi Jama'at, originally an Indian Islamic movement, joined the competition to attract followers at universities. Established in the 1930s by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas al-Kandahlawi, it maintained a loose organizational structure and functioned as a community based on personal relationships.[63] Tablighi Jama'at had established itself in Indonesia by the 1970s, but only in the 1980s did it venture onto university campuses. Centred in an old mosque in Kebon Jeruk Jakarta, it expanded to various cities outside Jakarta. Its followers have been active in conducting *khurūj*, travelling around to advocate *da'wa* causes. In contrast to Ikhwān al-Muslimīn and Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr, this movement was not interested in politics, or at least not in any direct effort to sieze political power, rather concentrating on individual reform and renewal by preaching

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[61] For an introduction to this movement, see D. Commins, 'Taqiy al-Din al-Nabhani and the Islamic Liberation Party', *The Muslim World Journal,* 81 (1991), pp. 194-211; S. Taji-Farouki, *A Fundamental Quest: Hizb al-Tahrir and the Search for the Islamic Caliphate* (London: Grey Seal, 1996).

[62] On the spread of this movement, see Rusydi Zakaria, 'Studi Awal tentang Kelompok-kelompok Keagamaan di Kampus Universitas Pajajaran', *Penamas: Jurnal Penelitian Agama dan Masyarakat*, 20: 7 (1995), pp. 17-8.

[63] Concerning this movement and its transnational network, see a number of articles compiled in Muhammad Khalid Masud (ed.), *Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablighi Jama'at as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal* (Leiden, Boston, Koln: Brill, 2000). See also Yoginder Singh Sikand, *The Origins and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at (1920-2000): a Cross-Country Comparative Study* (London: Orient Longman, 2002).

door-to-door and urging Muslims to perform their religious duties and rituals properly. Tablighi Jama'at now has a presence in almost all the afore-mentioned universities.[64]

These transnational movements had to compete with small underground quietist *usrah* groups known as a whole as the NII movement, as we have noted earlier. Overall, the aim of the NII movement has been synonymous with the *Darul Islam* aspiration. Specifically, it was aimed at creating an Islamic state with a pre-eminently revolutionary and non-compromising political stance by first establishing an Islamic community or *jama'ah islamiyah*. The activities of this movement generally followed a similar pattern to those of the other movements, particularly Ikhwān al-Muslimīn, but they were organized more secretly and followed the direction of particular *amirs*, 'leaders'. This movement likewise called the activities in its secret cells '*Tarbiyah Islamiyah*'.[65]

Initially, the NII movement developed among a small group of students in Yogyakarta. Irfan S. Awwas, the leader of the Badan Koordinasi Pemuda Masjid (Coordinating Board of Mosque Youth, BKPM), played an important role in accelerating the spread of this movement. He disseminated the movement's ideas by publishing the semi-clandestine magazine *Arrisalah*.[66] One of the most important links in the NII movement was the Pesantren Ngruki established by Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir. Despite the fact that both were relative newcomers with certain ties to DDII, they emerged as the movement's main ideologues through manuals teaching the inculcation of a spirit to overthrow the secular government and replace it with an Islamic state. As the manuals demonstrated, these two leaders were strongly influenced by Ikhwān al-Muslimīn thought. Because of their influential leadership in the movement, both were pursued by the police and consequently forced to flee to Malaysia in 1985. Without them, *usrah* groups continued to attract adherents and established footholds in cities in Java, including Karanganyar, Boyolali, Klaten, Yogyakarta, Temanggung, Brebes, Cirebon, Bandung and Jakarta.[67]

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[64] As for the growth of this movement among university students, see Marzani Anwar, 'Gerakan Jama'ah Tabligh dalam Kehidupan Mahasiswa Yogyakarta', *Penamas: Jurnal Penelitian Agama dan Masyarakat*, 20: 7 (1995), pp. 29-39. See also other articles in the same volume, such as Haidhor Ali Ahmad, 'Kelompok-kelompok Keagamaan di Dalam dan Sekitar Kampus ITS', pp. 44-46, and Huda Ali, 'Kehidupan Beragama dan kelompok-kelompok Keagamaan di Kampus Unibraw, Malang', pp. 62-64.

[65] One of the main references for the NII members in their secret cells is Imaduddin al-Mustaqim, *Risalah Tarbiyah Islamiyah: Menuju Generasi yang Diridhoi Allah* (...).

[66] For a more detailed account on the NII movement, see Santosa (1997), pp. 451-4. See also Bruinessen (2002), and Sidney Jones, *Al-Qaeda in Southeast Asia: The Case of the 'Ngruki Network' in Indonesia*, Asia Report 42 (Jakarta/Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2002).

[67] Ibid.

Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Bahasa Arab (LIPIA)

Conditions created by DDII provided a foundation on which Saudi Arabia could further develop its Wahhabi influence. Alarmed by the widespread impact of the Iranian Revolution, the Kingdom set up Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Bahasa Arab (Institute of the Study of Islam and Arabic, LIPIA) in Jakarta in 1980. It was initially established by Saudi Decree No. 5/N/26710 as Lembaga Pengajaran Bahasa Arab (Institute of Arabic Teaching, LPBA). Its first location was at Jl. Raden Saleh, Central Jakarta, before moving to Jl. Salemba Raya, also in Central Jakarta, in 1986. Its current address is at Jl. Buncit Raya, South Jakarta. [68]

To pave the way for the establishment of LIPIA, the then Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Indonesia, Bakr ʻAbbās Khamīs, played an enormously important role in initiating diplomatic steps with the Indonesian government. The institute was the first foreign educational institution in Indonesia and began its operations on 12 May 1981. In the first three years it was concerned with teaching the Arabic language to candidates recruited by DDII to study in Saudi Arabia. They were generally talented preachers who had completed their task of conducting *daʻwa* activities in remote areas within the framework of the transmigration Muslim preachers programme.[69] LIPIA offered regular programmes of Arabic courses, including a one-year, non-intensive course and a two-year pre-university course.

Broadening of its programmes, LIPIA recruited talented students from numerous famous modernist and traditionalist *pesantrens*, such as the Pesantren Gontor Ponorogo, the Pesantren Manbaul Ulum Jombang, the Pesantren Al-Amien Madura and the Pesantren Darut Dakwah wal Irsyad, South Sulawesi.[70] It provided full scholarships to students attending the pre-university intensive Arabic course. In addition to tuition fees, they received an allowance, accommodation facilities and books. LIPIA eventually opened undergraduate programmes in Islamic law and first offered a bachelor's degree in 1986. In this programme, students study of a variety of Islamic subjects, including Qur'anic Exegesis, Islamic Theology, Traditions, Islamic Jurisprudences, Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence, Maxims of Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic History and Arabic. Several classical textbooks on Islamic doctrine are used, including *Fatḥ al-Qadīr*, *Subul al-Salām, Bidāyat al-Mujtahid* and *Ibn Qudāma*, in addition to modern ones, such as *Al-Qaul al-Mufīd ʻalā Kitāb al-Tawḥīd, Al-Wajīz fī 'Īḍāḥ*

[68] Lembaga Pengajaran Bahasa Arab, *Prospektus Lembaga Pengajaran Bahasa Arab As-Su'udi di Indonesia* (Jakarta: LPBA, 1985), p. 8.

[69] Interview with Misbach Malim, Jakarta, 1 February 2003.

[70] Interview with Muhammad Zaini, LIPIA staff member of student administration, Jakarta, 25 March 2003. This information is based on the profile of the institute.

al-Qawāʿīd and *Muzakkarat al-Thaqāfat al-Islāmiyya*.[71] Since the opening of this programme, the name LIPIA has officially replaced LPBA.

LIPIA is directly associated with the Imām Muḥammad ibn Saʿūd Islamic University of Riyad and directed by a Saudi Arabian responsible for academic and administrative affairs under the direct supervision of Saudi Arabian Embassy in Jakarta.[72] The first director was ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿAmr, a student of Bin Bāz. As the institution administratively responsible for LIPIA, the university selects and recruits lecturers from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, Somalia and Indonesia. They work with the university on a contract basis. A few additional teaching staff were personally recruited by the director, such as ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Baghdādī, the main propagator of the Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr, who was recruited by ʿAbd ʿAzīz ʿAbd Allāh al-ʿAmr. [73]

Because of the important position of LIPIA in the eyes of Saudi Arabia, a number of high functionaries of the Kingdom have visited this institute: Prince Sulṭān ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, Prince Saʿūd al-Fayṣal, Prince Sulṭān ibn Salmān ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, Prince Turkī al-Fayṣal, Khalīd bin Muḥammad al-Anqarī, ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī, Usama Fayṣal, ʿAbd Allāh al-Hijji, ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṣāliḥ al-ʿUbayd and Ibrahīm al-Akhdār.[74] Because of the Kingdom's considerable support, LIPIA extended its influence in a relatively short time. LIPIA printed books on Wahhabite doctrines and al-Qur'an editions distributed free of charge to hundreds of Islamic educational institutions and religious organizations. Among the books are *Al-ʿUbudiyya* and *Al-ʿAqīda al-Wāsiṭiyya* by Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya, *ʿAqīda Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jamāʿa* by Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ al-ʿUthaymīn, *Buṭlān ʿAqāʿid al-Shīʿa* by ʿAbd al-Sattār al-Tunsawī, *Al-Khuttut al-ʿĀrida li al-Shīʿa al-Ithnā ʿAshiriyya* by Muḥib al-Dīn al-Khātib and *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* by Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb.[75] It has also nurtured *daʿwa* activities by organizing the *Musābaqat al-Tilāwat al-Qur'ān* (the Contest of Reciting the Qur'an), opening *halqas* and *dauras* and running *daʿwa* trainings in cooperation with various Islamic organizations.

Although the exact extent of its influence cannot be assessed, many aspects of Wahhabite doctrine have been espoused by students. Their acquaintance with Wahhabite doctrine was facilitated more thoroughly by various *halqas* and *dauras* in which LIPIA lecturers had the opportunity to give

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[71] Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab, *Bayān bi al-Kutub wa al-Muzakkarat al-Muqarrarat li Qism al-Sharīʿa* (Jakarta: LIPIA, 2003).

[72] Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab, *Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab di Indonesia Pada Tahun Kelima Belas Hijriah* (Jakarta: LIPIA, 1995), pp. 3-5.

[73] Interview with Muhammad Yusuf Harun, teaching staff of the LIPIA, Jakarta, 19 March 2003.

[74] Lembaga Ilmu Pengetahuan Islam dan Arab, *Warta Tahunan: Tahun Akademik 1418-1419 H* (Jakarta: LIPIA, 1999), p. 25.

[75] Ibid., pp. 24-5.

lectures.[76] But it should be noted that the thoughts of the main Islamist ideologues, such as Banna, Quṭb and Mawdudi, also found fertile soil in the institute. In retrospect, it is no surprise that the institute generated many activists of the Partai Keadilan [Sejahtera].

In an effort to intensify its campaign for Wahhabism, LIPIA introduced the programme of sending talented students to study in Saudi Arabia, particularly at the Imām Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd Islamic University and the Medina Islamic University. Through this programme, hundreds of its graduates were able to continue their studies in the Kingdom. This opportunity became a major attraction of LIPIA. For many Indonesian Muslims studying Islam in Saudi Arabia remains a great source of pride. For centuries Saudi Arabia had been the main destination of Indonesian students wanting to seek religious knowledge in the Middle East. They studied in *halqas* conducted by well-known religious scholars in the Masjīd al-Ḥarām in Mecca and the Masjīd al-Nabawī in Medina.[77]

Consonant with the growth of the Salafism of Muḥammad 'Abduh and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, however, the central position of Saudi Arabia as a favourite place to study was gradually replaced by al-Azhar University in Cairo. It took over the task of producing religious scholars who played an active role in the dissemination of modernist notions in Indonesia. Cairo's position as the centre of religious authority remained intact for decades.[78] But it began to lose its attraction in the 1970s, ceding its position to the growing popularity of Saudi Arabian universities. The presence of LIPIA undoubtedly boosted Saudi Arabian efforts to revive its central position in the eyes of Indonesian Muslims and this is confirmed by the fact that the number of Indonesians studying in Saudi Arabian universities grew significantly from year to year.

To support its claim of being the 'protector of the Muslim *umma*', Saudi Arabia has always supported calls for jihad throughout the Muslim world. The first such instance occurred when the Afghan War broke out in the 1980s. At that time, Saudi Arabia, in collaboration with Ikhwān al-Muslimīn and other

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[76] According to Salim Segaf al-Jufri, teaching staff of LIPIA, students were not steered to believe in Wahhabite doctrines. Those who had the Nahdhatul Ulama background, for instance, did not generally change in their religious belief and remained with their NU-ness. The then director of the LIPIA prohibited lecturers to question the difference of students' religious beliefs. Interview with Salim Segaf al-Jufri, 18 March 2003. This information is confirmed by Badruddin Busra, a LIPIA graduate. Interview with Badruddin Busra, Jakarta, 25 March 2003.

[77] See Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay-Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulama in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2004). For the dynamics around the life of Indonesian students in Mecca in the nineteenth century, see C. Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century: Daily Life, Customs, and Learning of the Moslims of the East-India-Archipelago* (Leiden: Brill, 1970).

[78] On al-Azhar as the centre of religious learning for Indonesians, see Mona Abaza, *Indonesian Students in Cairo: Islamic Education, Perceptions and Exchanges* (Paris: Association Archipel, 1994).

Arab Islamist organizations, mobilized jihad volunteers from Arab and other Muslim countries.[79] Thousands of volunteers were thereby able to take part in jihad. They were consolidated in the offices of the Rābiṭat and Ikhwān al-Muslimīn in Peshawar, which had become a centre for recruitment, training and coordination of volunteers, and later developed into the Maktab al-Khidmat li'l-Mujāhidīn al-'Arab (Service Bureau of Arab *Mujāhids*) run by 'Abd Allāh 'Azzām and now by the infamous Osama bin Lāden.[80] Almost all Afghan *mujahidin* factions, including the Hizb-e-Islami, the Jama'at-e-Islami, and the Jama'at al-Da'wa ila al-Qur'an wa Ahl al-Hadith, led by Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, and Jamil al-Rahman respectively, enjoyed the support of the volunteers.[81]

The appeal for volunteers to wage jihad in Afghanistan emerged as the first serious challenge to foreign students studying in Saudi Arabia supported by grants from the Kingdom. They were required to prove their commitment to Islam. After finishing their studies many such students, among them Indonesians, decided to take part in the Afghan War. A dozen spent time in Afghanistan. Participating in the jihad there turned out to be a sort of fieldwork for them. In the Afghan battlefields they stood shoulder to shoulder with volunteer fighters from various radical organizations in the Muslim world, who found in the Afghan war an arena in which they could channel their radical spirit to defend Islam.[82]

A New Type of Middle Eastern Graduate

The return of the LIPIA graduates who had completed their studies in Saudi Arabia and had undergone their baptism of fire in the Afghan War marked the birth of a new Wahhabi generation in Indonesia. Among them we note some famous names such as Chamsaha Sofwan or Abu Nida, Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin and Aunur Rafiq Ghufron. They were DDII cadres who upon their return taught in *pesantrens* attached to it, including the Pesantren al-Mukmin, Ngruki, Pesantren Wathaniyah Islamiyah, Kebumen and Pesantren al-Furqan, Gresik. In contrast to traditional *pesantrens* of the Nahdlatul Ulama, these *pesantren*s are modern in character and ideologically close to Wahhabism. To some extent, they resemble the *pesantrens* developed by modernist Muslim organizations, including the Muhammadiyah, al-Irsyad and Persis, particularly in the fact that they adopt modern subjects. It should be noted, however, that the main emphasis

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[79] See Barnett R. Rubin, 'Arab Islamists in Afghanistan', in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Political Islam, Revolution, Radicalism, or Reform?* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1997), p. 185.

[80] Concerning the history of this organization, see Gunaratna (2002), p. 18.

[81] Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Islam, Oil and Great Game in Central Asia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000), p. 132.

[82] Kepel (2002), pp. 138-41.

of their curriculum is on the teachings of Arabic, Islamic theology and jurisprudence.

Given their background, it is apparently inappropriate to characterize the fresh graduates as 'lumpenintellegentia', a term introduced by Oliver Roy (1996) in imitation of Karl Marx to describe a new generation of militants who are poorly educated and have no capacity to speak of Islam as a political project.[83] In fact, these graduates are well educated and enjoy a certain status as preachers capable of proper discourse. DDII prides itself on moulding religious authorities capable of speaking Arabic and reading classical and modern Arabic texts, while, in contrast to traditional *'ulamā',* adopting puritanical views. As DDII cadres, they are well acquainted with the Islamist discourses of modern political Islamic movements.

Nevertheless, these fresh graduates can be distinguished from their predecessors, DDII cadres who likewise had the opportunity to complete their studies in Saudi Arabia or other Middle Eastern countries, in terms of their commitment to spread Wahhabism under the banner of the Salafi *da'wa*. They have asserted that Indonesian Muslims desperately need an understanding of true Islam as practised by the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*. In the name of Islamic Reformism, they have criticized the established modernist Muslim organizations, including the Muhammadiyah, al-Irsyad and Persis, which they perceive as having lost their reformist élan by sacrificing it to a tendency towards rationalization. Instead of persistently struggling for the implementation of the principles of *tawḥīd,* they have claimed that the organizations have grown preoccupied with their own interests, like participating in politics and managing schools, orphanages and hospitals, at the expense of the main problems of the *umma*.

The environment in Saudi Arabia in the aftermath of the Grand Mosque seizure undoubtedly contributed to the birth of this new Wahhabi generation. Saudi Arabian policy to demonstrate its commitment of Islam more clearly, while suppressing radical expressions of political Islam, seemingly became a catalyst for widespread manifestations of Wahhabi resurgence, particularly among youth and university students and staff. They enthusiastically demonstrate a commitment to religious propagation and a puritanical life-style, while refraining from openly criticizing the government.[84] Witnessing this development directly, DDII cadres who studied in Saudi Arabia in the 1980s were seemingly obsessed with a more systematic propagation of Wahhabism. Upon their return, they were not just ready to apply their knowledge of Wahhabism, but also to mobilize people to join their organization.

It was Abu Nida who took an initiative to develop the Salafi *da'wa* movement. He was born in Lamongan, East Java in 1954. Having finished his secondary schooling at the Pendidikan Guru Agama Muhammadiyah

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[83] See Roy (1996), pp. 84-5.

[84] R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985), pp. 139-40.

(Muhammadiyah Islamic Teacher Training School) in Karangasem, he showed interest in participating in a DDII *da'wa* training course held in Pesantren Darul Falah in Bogor, under the framework of the transmigration Muslim preachers programme. He was sent to the hinterland of West Kalimantan, and Muhammad Natsir recommended him for study in Saudi Arabia. He studied Arabic at LIPIA before going to Imām Muḥammad Ibn Sa'ūd University, sponsored by the Rābiṭat. While studying Islamic Law he worked as a staff member at the DDII branch office in Riyadh and made contacts with funding sources. Before returning home, he fought in the Afghan War, joining the Jama'at al-Da'wa ila al-Qur'an wa Ahl al-Hadith faction led by Jamil al-Rahman.[85]

In 1986 the fervour to conduct the *da'wa* activities had led Abu Nida to Yogyakarta after he had taught in the Pesantren al-Mukmin, Ngruki, for less than one year. Yogyakarta has a unique character. Although it is associated with a syncretistic Javanese *abangan* culture, symbolized by the existence of the Yogyakarta Court, it was the birthplace of the Muhammadiyah. From this city this largest reformist-modernist organization spread and took root all over Indonesia. In addition, the city has long been known as the main destination of students wanting to study at a university. At the beginning of every academic year, thousands of students from almost all the provinces pour into the city. Because of the influx of students from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds, Yogyakarta has developed as a sort of cultural capital. Here, Abu Nida began to propagate Salafi *da'wa* activities, targeting university areas with the goal of attracting students.

Supported by Saefullah Mahyuddin, the then head of the DDII branch office in Yogyakarta known for his closeness to the Jama'ah Shalahuddin (Shalahuddin Community), a religious activity unit attached to the Gadjah Mada University, Abu Nida lectured at Islamic study forums organized by the community and promoted Wahhabite doctrines among students. He also participated in the *halqas* and *dauras* held by activists of the *Tarbiyah* Movement, known to be close to Ikhwān al-Muslimīn or engaged in NII activism. Working in conjunction with Abu Ridho, for instance, he organized *halqas* and *dauras* around Gadjah Mada University and created the slogan 'Aqidah Salafi, Manhaj Ikhwani', popular among activists at the end of the 1980s.[86] Abu Nida extended his reach to Solo, forging cooperation with NII activists, such as Muhammad Basiron, and attracted participants not only among students but also among the common people who had previously become acquainted with the activities of NII or Shi'ite-inclined NII led by M. Muzakir.

[85] Interview with Abu Nida, Yogyakarta, 15 December 2002. This information was confirmed by my interview with Tri Madiono, one of the early followers of Abu Nida, Yogyakarta, 21 December 2002.

[86] Interview with Abu Mash'ab, Yogyakarta, 18 December 2002.

This movement was an NII splinter group known as *Kelompok Gumuk* (Gumuk Group), named after the village where it was based.[87]

As interest in the Wahhabite doctrines spread, Abu Nida expanded his influence by independently organizing Salafi *halqas* and *dauras*.[88] Favourite sites were the Mardiyah Mosque, near the Medical Faculty of Gadjah Mada University, the Mujahidin Mosque, near the Institut Keguruan Ilmu Pendidikan (Teachers' Training State College) in Yogyakarta, the Siswa Graha Mosque, Pogung, the STM Kentungan Mosque and a house in Jl. Kaliurang, Km 4,5 CT II/B7 Yogyakarta, known as B7. Through this strategy, Abu Nida recruited into his Salafi circles a significant number of university students from the Gadjah Mada University, the Teachers' Training State College of Yogyakarta and the National University of Development (Universitas Pembangunan Nasional, UPN) of Yogyakarta.[89]

With support from his two closest friends, Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin and Aunur Rofik Ghufron, Abu Nida organized a one-month *daura* in the Pesantren Ibn al-Qayyim, Sleman, Yogyakarta, not far from Gadjah Mada University. This *pesantren* was established by DDII and led by Suprapto A. Jarimi, a Muhammadiyah preacher. The enthusiasm shown by university students wanting to attend this *daura* inspired Abu Nida to institutionalize it as the 'Daurah Ibn al-Qayyim'. Aunur Rafiq Ghufron followed in Abu Nida's footsteps by opening a similar *daura* in his own *pesantren*, al-Furqan, in Gresik, East Java, to focus on the learning of Arabic. Many students who had attended the Daurah Ibn al-Qayyim went to Gresik to master Arabic. [90]

Since the early 1990s, the *da'wa* activities developed by Abu Nida have been buttressed by the arrival of Ja'far Umar Thalib, Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas and Yusuf Usman Baisa, LIPIA graduates of Hadrami descent who had studied abroad. Ja'far Umar Thalib, as we have noted earlier, had studied at the Mawdudi Islamic Institute of Lahore, Pakistan, while Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas and Yusuf Usman Baisa had completed their studies at the Imām Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd University and the Islamic teaching centre run by Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn in Najran, respectively. LIPIA assigned them the task of teaching at the Pesantren al-Irsyad, Tengaran, Salatiga. They also immersed themselves in campus *da'wa* activities, particularly those at Diponegoro University, State University of Eleventh March, Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta and Gadjah Mada University. Seeing the high level of students enthusiasm, they decided to design their own programme based in the

[87] Interview with Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, Solo, 27 December 2002.

[88] For preliminary surveys about this movement, see Ahzab Muttaqin, *Kaum Salafi di Yogyakarta: Melacak Sejarah Awal* (Yogyakarta: Pusat Penelitian IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 1999). See also Sabarudin, *Jama'ah At-Turats al-Islami di Yogyakarta* (Yogyakarta: Pusat Penelitian IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 2000).

[89] Interviews with Abu Nida, Yogyakarta, 21 December 2002, and with Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, Solo, 27 December 2002.

[90] Interview with Abu Nida, Yogyakarta, 21 December 2002.

pesantren. Called *I'tikāf Ramaḍān*, a term referring to the practice of remaining in mosques to read the Qur'an during the fasting month of Ramaḍān, it was a *daura* activity that focussed on Arabic language learning in the heightened spiritual atmosphere of Ramadan.[91]

The efforts made by these new graduates to spread the Salafi *da'wa* proved fruitful. Salafi communities, whose membership consisted mainly of university students, proliferated. Initially, their presence was most significantly felt in Yogyakarta, Solo and Semarang, where they formed an exclusive current in the Islamic movement. As other Saudi Arabian graduates returned, the phenomenon quickly spread to Jakarta, Bandung, Cirebon, Semarang, Purwokerto and Makassar. In Jakarta, a number of Salafi communities emerged and organized *halqas* and *dauras* in the area around Jatinegara, Duren Sawit and Salemba, where Dahlan Basri, Abdul Hakim Abdat and Ahmad Farid Oqbah gave lectures.[92] Likewise in Makassar, Masrur Zainuddin disseminated the Salafi *da'wa* messages by giving lectures in *halqas* and *dauras* held by students in the University of Hasanuddin, the Teachers' Training State College and the Indonesian Muslim University (Universitas Muslimin Indonesia, UMI).[93]

Salafi Foundations

The multiplication of Salafi communities led seamlessly to the emergence of foundations that received considerable financial support from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other Gulf countries. Abu Nida set up the As-Sunnah Foundation in 1992 and involved Ja'far Umar Thalib, Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas and Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin. Together, they built a mosque at Degolan, Kaliurang, Yogyakarta as a centre of activities. Ja'far Umar Thalib managed the mosque named after the leader of the Jama'at al-Da'wa ila al-Qur'an wa Ahl al-Hadith *mujahidin* faction, Jamil al-Rahman. Students from universities in Central Java and other provinces attended *halqas* and *dauras* held in this *pesantren.* It quickly became the most important centre of Salafi activity in Indonesia.

Through the As-Sunnah Foundation, *da'wa* activities and the founding of *halqas* and *dauras* were pursued to promote the Salafi movement. More and more university students joined in the *da'wa* activities. Aware of this, Abu Nida and his closest companions published *As-Sunnah*, the first Salafi periodical to appear in Indonesia, in 1994. *As-Sunnah* addressed Wahhabite doctrines and *fatwās* of Saudi Arabian religious authorities about beards, television, radio and the like. Ayip Syafruddin was managing editor. Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin and several other Salafi proponents were on the editorial staff, while Abu Nida, Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas and Ja'far Umar Thalib served as its editorial

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[91] Interview with Yusuf Usman Baisa, Cirebon, 17 February 2003.
[92] Interview with Ahmad Farid Oqbah, Jakarta, 11 February 2003.
[93] Interview with Zainuddin Abdullah, Makassar, 12 May 2003.

board.[94] In every issue there was a debate on women and the limitations they should accept in social interactions. It also addressed political issues, particularly the Iranian Revolution, whose excesses some articles criticized.[95]

Their activities succeeded in attracting the interest of foundation executives in the Middle East. Al-Mu'assasat al-Ḥaramayn al-Khayriyya (Haramayn Charitable Foundation) and al-Jam'iyya Ihyā' al-Turāth al-Islāmī (Reviving of Islamic Heritage Society) funded Abu Nida's ambition to build mosques.[96] Based in Saudi Arabia, Al-Mu'assasat al-Ḥaramayn al-Khayriyya was created in the mid-1980s with such aims as 'establishing correct Islamic doctrines, educating new generations, confronting ideological and atheistic invasion and calling non-Muslims to Islam'. Backed by the Saudi religious establishment, it was under the supervision of the Minister of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, *Da'wa* and Guidance of Saudi Arabia. Kuwait-based Al-Jam'iyya Ihyā' al-Turāth al-Islāmī was set up in 1981, operated under the supervision of the Kuwaiti government, and also received support from the Saudi religious establishment, evidenced in a letter sent by 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Abd Allāh bin Bāz to its founder, Ṭarīq Samiy Sulṭān al-'Aishiy.[97] Heartened by these opportunities, in January 1994 Abu Nida created the Majlis Al-Turats al-Islami Foundation whose slogan is to call Muslims to return to true path of Islam (*tashhīd al-'aqīda*).

Under the auspices of Majlis al-Turats al-Islami, Abu Nida opened a model village at Wirokerten, Bantul, in which he set up the Pesantren Al-Turats al-Islami. His idea was to imitate the first model Islamic village established by Ashari Muhammad, the leader of the Darul Arqam, in Sungai Penchala, a remote area twenty kilometres from Kuala Lumpur.[98] In this modest village a mosque was built and named Jamil al-Rahman. Around it, Abu Nida and other teachers of the *pesantren* live in cluster of five or six houses. All activities of the *pesantren* were concentrated in the mosque. Its students were never many, fifty at most. They were taught to read classical and modern Islamic texts, particularly those emanating from the Wahhabite sect, and to internalize the

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[94] Interview with Ayif Syafruddin, Solo, 28 December 2002; see also colophon of the *As-Sunnah*, *As-Sunnah* 12: 1 (1995), p. 2.

[95] See, for instance, Abu Nida, "Bahaya Revolusi Iran", *As-Sunnah*, 16: 2 (1996), pp. 33-50.

[96] These two foundations are mentioned by Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (2003) as the main sources of charity in the Muslim world. See Jonathan Benthall and Jerome Bellion-Jourdan, *The Charitable Crescent: Politics of Aid in the Muslim World* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), pp. 36 and 73.

[97] See Jam'iyya Ihyā' al-Turāth al-Islāmī, *Manhāj al-Jam'iyya li'l-Da'wa wa al-Tawjiyya* (Kuwait: Jam'iyya Ihyā' al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1997), p. 23. See also *www.alturath.org*.

[98] Concerning this movement, see Ahmad Fauzi bin Abdul Hamid, *Islamic Resurgence in the Periphery: A Study of Political Islam in Contemporary Malaysia with Special Reference to the Darul Arqam Movement 1968-1996,* PhD Dissertation (United Kingdom: University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, 1998). See also Noorhaidi Hasan, 'In Search of Identity: the Contemporary Islamic Communities in Southeast Asia', *Studia Islamika-Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies*, 7: 3 (December 2000), pp. 67-110.

Salafi way of life.[99] Later Abu Nida established the Islamic Centre Bin Bāz, with which the Bin Bāz Kindergarten, the Bin Bāz Primary School and the Bin Bāz Junior High School have been affiliated, in Karang Gayam, Sitimulyo, Piyungan, Bantul, Yogyakarta.

Inspired by the success of Abu Nida, Muhammad Yusuf Harun, another Imām Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd University graduate appointed to the teaching staff of LIPIA, set up the Al-Sofwa Foundation.[100] Support was provided by Muḥammad Khalaf, an affluent businessman from Saudi Arabia, through the al-Mu'assasat al-Ḥaramayn al-Khayriyya and the al-Jam'iyya Ihyā' al-Turāth al-Islāmī.[101] This foundation claimed to a duty to 'uphold God's message by cleansing the *umma*'s faith of *bid'a, khurafa* and *shirk* and called Muslims to return to al-Qur'an and Sunna consonant with the understanding of the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ'*.[102] Besides its main role as an agent channelling philanthropic aid from Middle Eastern foundations, it has been active in *da'wa* activities, such as *da'i* training programmes, *da'wa* courses and the publication and distribution of Islamic books. Its activities continued to develop under the leadership of Abu Bakar Muhammad al-Altway to the extent that it was able to produce and distribute *da'wa* cassettes called *Tasjīlat al-Sofwa* as well as translate and distribute more Islamic books. Pustaka Azzam, the publishing house of this foundation, emerged as the most important Salafi publishing house in Indonesia.[103] This foundation was even able to build a fairly luxurious building in South Jakarta and a centre of Muslim preacher training named Imam as-Syafi'i in Cilacap.

Shortly after the setting up of the al-Sofwa foundation, Ahmad Zawawi established the Lajnah al-Khairiyyah al-Musyarakah (Cooperative Committee for Islamic Charity). He was one of the DDII cadres given the task of coordinating a pilot project of *da'wa* among non-Muslims in the Mentawai islands, West Sumatra, in his capacity as the deputy-secretary of that region's DDII branch office. Thanks to the recommendation of Muhammad Natsir, he continued his studies at the Imām Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd University in 1982. Having completed his studies, he was sent to be an instructor at the Arabic Training Centre of the Muhammadiyah by DDII and, at the same time, served as a staff member on its international cooperation board. Lajnah al-Khairiyah maintained direct contact with Jam'iyya Ihyā' al-Turāth. Indeed, it can be said to be an unofficial representative of the latter. When established, it had an office in

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[99] Interview with Abu Isa, a teacher in the pesantren, Yogyakarta, 14 December 2002.

[100] Interview with Muhammad Yusuf Harun, Buncit Raya, Jakarta, 19 March 2003.

[101] Interview with Suroso and Sandhi, foundation staff, Jakarta, 25 October 2001.

[102] Yayasan Al-Sofwa, *Kilas Yayasan Al-Sofwa,* booklet (Jakarta: Al-Sofwa, t.t.). See also www.alsofwah.or.id.

[103] There are a dozen other minor Salafi publishing houses in Indonesia, including Pustaka al Sofwah, Pustaka al-Haura, Maktabah Salafy Press, Penerbit an-Najiyah, Pustaka Imam Buchori, Darul Hadith, Pustaka Imam Syafei, Darul Falah, Pustaka Arafah, Pustaka At-Tibyan, Pustaka al-Atsary, Darul Haq and Najla Press.

the Central Office of the Muhammadiyah in Menteng Raya Jakarta. As a consequence of tension with the Muhammadiyah arising from competition over the right to channel Kuwaiti financial support for *da'wa* activities, one year later the Lajnah al-Khairiyyah moved to Cempaka Putih, where it rented a house. Ahmad Zawawi has even been able to strengthen his foundation as the official representative of the Jam'iyya Ihyā' al-Turāth of Kuwait. Its office is now located at Jatinegara, East Jakarta. [104]

Lajnah al-Khairiyyah was set up to impose Kuwait's will on the incorporation and coordination of Muslim preachers, particularly graduates of Middle Eastern universities, and to channel social and philanthropic aid to orphans and impoverished people. Besides these main activities, Lajnah al-Khairiyyah sponsored the building of numerous mosques and Islamic centres and promoted the translating and publishing of Islamic books. Its activities covered a vast area including Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi, Kalimantan and Nusa Tenggara. Within this framework, Ahmad Zawawi asked Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin to develop the same activities in the area of Central Java, and the latter established Lajnah al-Istiqamah in Solo. This foundation evolved into the Imam al-Bukhari Foundation, which built an Islamic education complex called Kompleks Perguruan Imam al-Bukhari.

Foundations emerged in other cities but on a much smaller scale. In Semarang, for instance, Nurus Sunnah was created in 1993 to provide a centre of activities for Salafi followers. Led by Faqih Edi Susilo, a former NII activist, and using aid from Middle Eastern foundations channelled through al-Sofwa, it succeeded in building a mosque named Nurus Sunnah on land given by Amir Ali Bawazir, a businessmen of Hadrami descent in Semarang, which is located near the campus of University of Diponegoro.[105] In the same year, As-Sunnah was established in Cirebon and received considerable financial support from al-Sofwa.[106] In Bogor the Al-Huda Foundation was born, while in Karawang Nidaus Sunnah emerged. Other foundations have emerged very recently, including Al-Rahmah and Lembaga Dakwah dan Taklim led by Abdullah Baharmus and Muhammad Yusuf Harun, the founder of al-Sofwa, respectively.

These events were not confined to Java. In South Sulawesi, for instance, M. Zaitun Rasmin, a graduate of the Medina Islamic University, set up Wahdah Islamiyyah with support from al-Mu'assasat al-Ḥaramayn al-Khayriyya, Jam'iyya Ihyā' al-Turāth and Jam'iyya Dar al-Birr (Charity House Society), a United Arab Emirates-based Salafi foundation linked to Saudi Arabia. This foundation has developed various educational institutions at different levels, including the Islamic Kindergarten, the Islamic Primary School the Islamic Secondary School and the College for the Study of Islam and Arabic (Sekolah

[104] Interview with Ahmad Zawawi, Jatinegara, Jakarta, 10 March 2003.
[105] Interview with Faqih Edi Susilo, Semarang, 18 February 2003.
[106] Interview with Diding Sabaruddin, the secretary of the Yayasan As-Sunnah, Cirebon, 14 February 2003.

Tinggi Ilmu Islam dan Bahasa Arab, STIIBA). It also has a magazine, a radio station and several retail business centres.[107]

The emergence of foundations contributed to the burgeoning Salafi communities, which, beginning in the 1990s, no longer needed to organize their activities secretly owing to the shift in state policy towards political Islam. At the end of the 1980s, Soeharto introduced an Islamization strategy focusing particularly on the accentuation of Islamic symbols in public discourse and accommodating religious socio-political powers. A number of organizations and institutions that made use of Islamic symbols appeared on the scene. The Islamic Court Bill was introduced, followed by the Presidential Decree on the Compilation of Islamic Law. Islamic *sharī'a* banks and insurance companies sprang up and thousands of mosques were built under the sponsorship of the state.

While this was being endorsed at state level, growing numbers of people in popular and elite circles adopted symbolic expressions of Islam, such as wearing the *jilbab* and making the *hajj* to Mecca. Soeharto himself and his family decided to perform this ritual. Most important, Ikatan Cendikiawan Muslim se-Indonesian (Indonesian Muslim Intellectual Association, ICMI) was established under Soeharto's patronage, and Habibie, as a close associate of Soeharto, was appointed the leader of the organization.[108] In the wake of the introduction of this conservative Islamization strategy, the state made a drastic move away from its former secular position and prominent Muslim figures strode confidently onto the political scene. This shift diluted the long tension and conflict between Soeharto and Islamist figures around DDII, and led to the establishment of linkages between the two camps. DDII felt confident acting in the political arena of the state and a particular wing, KISDI, which had been established in 1987, began mobilizing rallies and demonstrations to call for Indonesian solidarity for Muslims in Palestine, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Bosnia, Kashmir and other trouble spots. The appearance of this organization was followed by the expansion of some Islamist print media, such as the *Suara Hidayatullah* and the *Sabili*.

Some scholars see this shift as a positive New Order accommodation towards a new Muslim middle class who had accepted the Pancasila and supported the New Order ideology of development.[109] Several facts indicate that the legitimacy crisis then being experienced by a regime more than twenty years

[107] Interview with Bahrun Nida Amin, the right-hand man of M. Zaitun Rasmin, and Lukman Abdus Samad, the director of Ma'had 'Ali, Makassar, 8 May 2003 .

[108] Bruinessen (1996), pp. 29-30.

[109] See R.W. Hefner, 'Islam, State, and Civil Society: ICMI and the Struggle for the Indonesian Middle Class', *Indonesia*, 56 (October 1993); Bahtiar Effendy, *Islam and the State: The Transformation of Islamic Political Ideas and Practices in Indonesia*, PhD Dissertation (Ohio: Ohio University, 1994); and M. Syafi'i Anwar, *Pemikiran dan Aksi Islam Indonesia: Sebuah Kajian tentang Cendekiawan Muslim Orde Baru* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 1995).

in power contributed a great deal to this shift. Indeed, at the end of the 1980s, Soeharto was losing the support of his political pillars, particularly the army. Then pro-democracy groups came on the scene to demand changes.[110] Soeharto was apparently seeking to shore up his legitimacy by relying on Muslim overtones to consolidate his power. As Wiliam Liddle (1996) rightly puts it, this shift was part of Soeharto's political strategy to hold onto power.[111]

Post-Gulf War Drift

The increased interest of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states in Salafi foundations clearly had something to do with the impact of the Gulf War, instigated by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990. Saddam Hussein, who had been supported by Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries in his battle against Iran, now claimed himself to be a liberator of Arab countries in the grasp of Western power. He even threatened other countries by placing his forces at the borders. As a response, Saudi Arabia invited American troops to guard its territory. Since then, the United States has built huge military bases and deployed troops on Saudi Arabian soil. Saudi Arabia even provided itself as a base from where the coalition forces launched counter-attacks to liberate Kuwait.

The presence of American troops on Saudi Arabian soil unleashed storms of protest. As in other Muslim countries, anti-American sentiments fanned by Saddam Hussein gained popular support. People praised Saddam as a heroic leader who dared to resist what they believed to be the tyranny of the West. Saudi Arabia's decision to invite American troops was certainly not popular.[112] Criticism of this policy was particularly vociferous among a new brand of Islamists who were predominantly urban and university-educated, mastering the language both of Islam and of modern concepts of rational government. They were the new generation of Wahhabis who had enthusiastically welcomed Wahhabi resurgence a decade earlier.[113]

In response to their criticism, the Hai'at Kibār al-'Ulamā' (Committee of the Senior *'Ulamā'*) led by Bin Bāz, the principal Wahhabite ideologue, issued a *fatwā* legitimizing the presence of the American troops. It should be noted that as an institution sponsored by the Kingdom, the Hai'at Kibār al-'Ulamā' enjoys unprecedented power and authority, far outweighing its

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[110] For a detailed discussion, see Douglas Ramage, *Politics in Indonesia: Democracy, Islam, and Ideology of Tolerance* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[111] R. William Liddle, 'The Islamic Turn in Indonesia: A Political Explanation', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 55: 3 (August 1996), p. 631.

[112] John L. Esposito, 'Political Islam and Gulf Security', in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism or Reform* (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997), pp. 56-7.

[113] R. Hrair Dekmejian, 'The Rise of Political Islamism in Saudi Arabia', *Middle East Journal*, 48: 4 (Autumn 1991), pp. 627-43.

counterparts in other Muslim countries.[114] Yet this *fatwā* elicited criticism from a number of personalities, like Safar al-Hawalī and Salmān al-'Auda. They considered it to be proof that the institute had been co-opted by the interests of the Kingdom rather than of Islam. Both were Ikhwān's cadres and drew great inspiration from Muḥammad Quṭb, the brother of Sayyid Quṭb who had lived in Saudi Arabia and had influenced several universities, particularly the Imām Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd Islamic University and the Umm al-Qura University of Mecca.[115] Their criticism reverberated loudly via other personalities such as Muḥammad ibn Surūr al-Nayef Zayn al-'Ābidīn. He condemned the *'ulamā'* and joined those accusing Hai'at Kibār al-'Ulamā' to be slaves of the United States. He was an al-Ikhwān refugee from Egypt who had been active in popularizing Ikhwān al-Muslimīn in Saudi Arabia before moving to Kuwait.[116]

A similar discourse also awoke echoes in other Gulf countries. In Kuwait 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd al-Khāliq, a graduate of the Medina Islamic University who was actively engaged in the Salafi *da'wa,* launched a harsh volley of criticism against the Hai'at Kibār al-'Ulamā'. He condemned the members of the Hai'at Kibār al-'Ulamā', castigating them as *'ulamā'* who had no comprehension of Islam and acted only in the interests of the regime. In Qatar, Yusuf Qaradawī, a moderate activist of the Ikhwān working at the University of Qatar, criticized Bin Bāz for issuing a *fatwā* legitimizing the attempt to bring about a peace process with Israel. In response to this *fatwa* Qaradawī argued that there could only be peace (*ṣulḥ*) when Israel settled the problem of its colonization of Palestinian soil. In his eyes, accepting the claim of Israel to Palestinian soil is an unforgivable mistake.[117]

Afghan war veterans whose experience of conducting a jihad was still fresh lost no time in launching their criticism of the royal family and the religious establishment of the Kingdom. Under the leadership of Bin Lāden, whose proposal to invite Afghan war veterans to fight Saddam Hussein was rejected, they condemned the Saudi Arabian policy of inviting in the Americans and asked the official Saudi *'ulamā'* to issue *fatwās* against non-Muslims based in the country. The Bin Lāden-led protest marked the rise of Salafi jihadis, to use Kepel's term, who reiterated the call for a global jihad that now included the Saudi government as an enemy regime.[118] They adopted 'Azzām's original call to defend the Muslim community in Afghanistan to extend the duration of jihad

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[114] Farouk A. Sankari, 'Islam and Politics in Saudi Arabia', in Ali E. Hillah Dessouki (ed.), *Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World* (New York: Praeger, 1982), pp. 185-188. See also Frank E. Vogel, *Islamic Law and Legal System: Studies of Saudi Arabia* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 83-117.

[115] Cf. Kepel (2002), pp. 213-7.

[116] I am grateful to Stephane Lacroix and Guido Steinberg, two scholars concerned with the issue of Islam and politics in Saudi Arabia, for their information about this figure.

[117] Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, 'Islamists and the Peace Process', in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Political Islam: Revolution, Radicalism or Reform* (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1997), pp. 218-9.

[118] Kepel (2002), p. 219.

indefinitely, moving into a permanent jihad against what they perceived as infidel oppression associated with the so-called 'Jewish-cum-Crusader' coalition led by the United States. They evolved into the network known today as al Qaeda, which in 1998 issued a manifesto under the aegis of 'The World Islamic Front for jihad against Jews and Crusaders'.[119]

In response to this criticism, Saudi Arabia implemented several repressive policies. Public meetings and discussions were prohibited and hundreds of activists were arrested. It banned the circulation of cassette recordings and pamphlets that criticised the Kingdom and the religious establishment. But this policy backfired, because it triggered violence and terrorism. In late 1995 bombs exploded near the American military base and at the training centre of the National Guard, in Dahran, killing a dozen American officers.[120]

Rising radicalism proved that the Saudi's policies had so far been fatal. The use of Islam, especially Wahhabism, to legitimize its policies has become a doubled-edged sword. As Mai Yamani (2000) rightly puts it:

> Although it [Saudi Arabia] has provided a set of unifying cultural symbols, it has also produced a vocabulary that can be deployed to criticize the ruling elite and call for a change in the direction of government policy. Such demands are hard for the state to crack down on because they are framed in the same terms as the language the state uses to legitimate itself. The government is caught between two broad sections of the new generation with different perceptions of the role of religion within society.[121]

The issue to be stressed here is that the tension and conflict that flared up in Saudi Arabia in the aftermath of the Gulf War had a great impact on the development of the Salafi *da'wa* movement in Indonesia. A division became visible between the protagonists of this movement, the issue that will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

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[119] See Gunaratra (2002), p. 45. See also Rashid (2000), p. 134.
[120] Esposito (1997), pp. 62-3.
[121] Mai Yamani, *Changed Identities: The Challenge of the New Generation in Saudi Arabia* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2000), p. 45.

CHAPTER III

COMPETITION AND CONFLICT IN THE SALAFI MOVEMENT

Having succeeded in establishing an exclusive current of Islamic activism in Indonesian universities, the Salafi movement began spreading beyond campuses at the beginning of the 1990s. Under the changing political circumstance, movement members organized *halqas* and *dauras* openly in mosques located on city outskirts and rural villages. As a result of this expansion, enclaves of members sprung up, followed by the construction of mosques and Islamic schools under the banner of the movement. Through religious activities organized systematically and openly, a sense of solidarity and group identity was born that fostered a network. The publication of pamphlets, bulletins, journals and books, provided communication channels through which Salafi messages were disseminated to a broader audience.

Nevertheless, the rapid proliferation of the Salafi movement was accompanied by increasing tension among its protagonists in their competition for the position as the movement's legitimate representative. All claimed to be authentic Salafis committed to the movement's goal of purity. One contender accused his rivals of being affiliated with Muḥammad ibn Surūr al-Nayef Zayn al-'Ābidīn, who, as said in the previous chapter, had fiercely criticized the Saudi Arabian government and its religious establishment over the presence of American troops on Saudi soil. The implication was that those accused were potentially violent jihadis who did not accept the existing government as legitimate. Fragmentation and conflict among the Salafis became inevitable. They split into two main currents: the so-called Sururis and non-Sururis. In the competition for membership and support, the two currents exploited transnational linkages, and in so doing reinforced their own networks.

The dynamics of the Salafi movement reflect the complexity of what Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori (1996) refer to as 'Muslim politics', which is defined as the competition over the interpretation of religious symbols and control of institutions, formal and informal, that produce and sustain them. These two theorists apply this definition to a variety of regional and transnational contexts in the Muslim world within which contests over political institutions and symbols take place. The distinctiveness of Muslim politics, they

argue, lies in its salient symbolic dimension, which revolves around the multiplicity of interpretations within shifting contexts, evolving meanings and the usage of symbols, values, tradition and ethnicity. Because of the centrality of symbolism, language plays a crucial role, through which symbols are expressed and defined. They suggest that the symbolic and persuasive dimension of Muslim politics has become virtually synonymous with the politics of language.[1]

The process of articulating symbolic politics and dominant values establishes boundaries that demarcate decision-making units in society and areas within and beyond state control. Because of their ambiguities, the boundaries are always open and subject to negotiation. Various individuals and groups thereby compete to represent the right to define boundaries in support of their organized claims and counterclaims. Religious authorities emerge as the main negotiators in this process because of their authority to speak for the divine presence, which further confirms their authority. Through mosques, religious lessons, Friday sermons and grassroots organizations they produce, articulate and disseminate an alternative interpretation to legitimate their right to sacred authority. Given the multiple centres of power in a society, the authorities are esteemed because they mediate among the various poles.[2]

Discourse is crucial to Muslim politics. As Ernesto Laclau (1996) puts it, since symbols have no 'necessary body and no necessary content', different individuals and groups 'instead compete among themselves to temporarily give their particularisms a function of universal representation'. In this competition one group usually attempts to exclude or subordinate another group by positioning itself as the only legitimate spokesperson for the 'universal'. Put another way, Laclau asserts that the universal does not have a concrete content of its own (which would confine it to itself) but is the always receding horizon resulting from the expansion of an indefinite chain of equivalent demands. In his conclusion, '[s]ociety generates a whole vocabulary of empty signifiers whose temporary signifieds are the results of political competition'.[3]

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[1] Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 5-11. Their emphasis on the symbolic aspect of politics follows the tendency that has developed among social anthropologists. Its forerunner was Clifford Geertz (1973), who in his *The Interpretation of Cultures, Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973) proposed a famous definition of religion as 'a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.' But this definition has been criticized by Talal Asad (1993), arguing that Geertz's view on religion as a belief system designed ultimately to confront questions of meaning reflects modern biases arising from Enlightenment Christianity. For a further account on this criticism, see Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 42-47

[2] Eickelman and Piscatori (1996), pp. 57-9.

[3] Ernesto Laclau, 'Universalism, Particularism, and the Question of Identity', in E.N. Wilmsen and P. McAllister (eds.), *The Politics of Difference* (Chicago: University Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 52-57.

The central figure who defined the dynamics of the Salafi movement in Indonesia was Ja'far Umar Thalib, the founder of Laskar Jihad. He joined the movement when it had already solidified its existence on university campuses. Alongside the opportunities he had gained to deliver religious lectures and sermons among university students, his central role soon became apparent. He has been known among the Salafis as a preacher who dared to stridently criticize all other Islamic movements and demonstrate mistakes committed by them. This reputation made him the movement's centre of attention and leading authority.

Hadrami Background

Ja'far Umar Thalib grew up in a Hadrami family of great religious zeal. His grandfather, Abdullah bin Amir bin Thalib, originated from the Hadramaut, a region located in present-day Yemen, where he was a prominent religious teacher. With his brothers, Abdullah migrated to the Indonesian archipelago in the 1850s. He went first to Kuala Lumpur but soon moved to Singapore, where he remained for a few months before continuing his journey to Banjarmasin. He lived there for a few years before moving to Madura, where he married an indigenous woman, the daughter of a respected village leader. From this marriage, Umar Thalib, the father of Ja'far, was born in 1919. One year after Umar Thalib was born, Abdullah died. His uncle then took over of the care of this orphan.[4]

Umar Thalib was educated at an Islamic school in Surabaya affiliated with al-Irsyad, a reformist, modernist Muslim organization predominant among Hadramis. This organization was set up by the Sudanese Ahmad Sorkatti in Jakarta in 1914 as the issue of another Hadrami organization, Jamiatul Khair. Initially, it was an informal group of like-minded individuals seeking to raise funds to support Sorkatti's school. Under the influence of the puritanism of Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb and the Salafism of Muḥammad 'Abduh and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, Sorkatti led the organization in calling for a purification of Muslim religious beliefs and practices though not at the expense of modern progress. The birth of al-Irsyad contributed enormously to the dynamics of Islam in Indonesia, particularly in relation to the dissemination of Islamic reform.[5]

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[4] This account is primarily based on my interviews with Ja'far Umar Thalib in Yogyakarta in December 2002. Cf. An official biography of Ja'far Umar Thalib published on the website of Laskar Jihad is now no longer available, 'Riwayat Hidup Al Ustadz Ja'far Umar Thalib', *www.laskarjihad.or.id/ about/cvjafar*. See also 'Pemberontakan Kristen Ambon Masih Berlangsung', *Interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib*, Suara Hidayatullah, 8: 13 (December 2000); and 'Ja'far Umar Thalib, Pelopor Jihad ke Ambon', *Forum Keadilan*, 7 (20 May 2001).

[5] On al-Irsyad, see Noer (1973), pp. 63-85. See also Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami Awakening, Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900-1942* (Ithaca: SEAP Cornell University, 1999), Bisri Affandi, *Syaikh Ahmad Syurkatti (1874-1943) Pembaharu dan Pemurni Islam di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 1999); and Hussein Badjerei, *Al-Irsyad Mengisi Sejarah Bangsa* (Jakarta: Presto Prima Utama, 1996).

Since the time of their arrival in the fifteenth century, Hadramis had played a highly active role in the dynamics of Islam in the archipelago.[6] The Shafi'ite school of law, which is the most important feature of Islam in Hadramaut, achieved predominance. Due to their prominent role, Hadramis, some of whom claimed to be descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, bearing the title *sayyid,* enjoyed religious authority and initiated activities that were ascribed to by their local community, where many of them became teachers, *imām*s and *muftī*s.[7] Hadramis claimed to be the natural leaders of native Muslims and, given the respect they enjoyed, this appeared to be an intrinsic tendency among them.[8]

Some researchers have pointed out that Hadramis, especially *sayyid*s*,* also played an active role in the political life of host societies. They forged alliances with local elites in various kingdoms, such as East Sumatra and West Borneo. This role was supported by their success in economic activities; they controlled various fields of business, including finance, real estate and service. At the core of their economic activities was money-lending.[9] The Dutch colonial authorities subsequently utilized the distinguished position of Hadramis for their own political interests. They did not hesitate, for instance, to make use of the international Hadrami network for diplomatic purposes. As a result of their collaboration, some members of the Hadrami elite pursued distinguished administrative careers in the Dutch colonial system.[10]

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century there was a reversal. The Dutch began to apply restrictive policies on Hadramis.[11] The backdrop of these policies was an upsurge in calls for Islamic reform compounded by the spread of

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[6] For a general survey about the presence of Hadrami immigrants in Southeast Asia, see Huub De Jonge and Nico Kaptein, 'The Arab Presence in Southeast Asia: Some Introductory Remarks', in Huub De Jonge and Nico Kaptein, *Transcending Borders, Arab, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), pp. 1-20.

[7] Peter G. Riddell, 'Religious Links between Hadhramaut and the Malay-Indonesian World, C. 1850 to C. 1950', in Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (eds.), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 220-221.

[8] Sumit K. Mandal, 'Natural Leaders of Native Muslims: Arab Ethnicity and Politics in Java under Dutch Rule', in Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (eds.), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), p. 196.

[9] William G. Clarence-Smith, 'Hadhrami Entrepreneurs in the Malay World, c. 1750 to c. 1940', in Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (eds.), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), p. 301.

[10] This phenomenon has been noted since the pioneering study about Hadramis in Indonesia by L.W.C. van den Berg. See L.W.C. van den Berg, *Hadthramut and the Arab Colonies in the Indian Archipelago*, trans. C.W.H. Sealy (Bombay: Government Central Press, 1887), p. 55.

[11] Fur a further account on this issue, particularly in relation to the Dutch fears against pan-Islamism, see C. van Dijk, 'Colonial Fears, 1890-1918: Pan Islamism and the Germano-Indian Plot', in Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein, *Trancending Borders: Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), pp. 53-89, cf. Michael F. Laffan, 'A Watchful Eye': the Meccan Plot of 1881 and Changing Dutch Perceptions of Islam in Indonesia, *Archipel* 63 (2002), pp. 79-108.

pan-Islamism fuelling anti-colonial sentiments. As a consequence, the Hadramis experienced a crisis in both their political and economic affairs, which was aggravated by the rise of new religious authorities that did not bear any Hadraminess.[12] In response to these challenges, the Hadramis took steps to strengthen their perceived cultural superiority and articulated a vision of Arab ethnicity while associating themselves with the ideas of reform. One of their strategies was to establish linkages with Istanbul, claimed to be their politico-religious centre.[13] Within this context, affluent Hadramis from both *sayyid* and non-*sayyid* backgrounds established Jamiatul Khair in 1905. The birth of this organization marked the era of awakening (*nahḍa*) among Hadramis; it emerged as the first modern organization among Indonesian Muslims to open Western-style schools.[14]

The fragmentation of Jamiatul Khair, which, as we have noted before, generated al-Irsyad, began with the arrival of Sorkatti to serve as a teacher and inspector of its schools in 1911. He dared to criticize a number of traditions commonly honoured among *sayyids*, such as kissing hands *(taqbīl)* and inter-*sayyid* marriage based on an involuted equality *(kafāʻa*) doctrine. The spur for the latter was when Sorkatti was asked whether an Arab woman of *sayyid* descent (*sharīfa)* was allowed to marry a non-*sayyid* man. Defending the letter of the law, he answered that it was allowed according to *sharīʻa*. This opinion certainly threatened the privilege enjoyed by *sayyid*s and, consequently, aroused opposition. Considerable support for his ideas was provided by the newly emerging leadership among the Hadramis, particularly non-*sayyids*, who had succeeded in carving out important political or economic positions.[15]

Because of Sorkatti's relentless efforts, al-Irsyad schools developed quickly. One of the schools was located in Surabaya, where Umar Thalib studied and was straightaway appointed a teacher after finishing *muʻallimin*, the religious teacher's course, which was equal to senior high school. Shortly after this appointment, however, he decided to move, establishing his own school in Sepajang, Sidoarjo, near Surabaya. During the Japanese occupation, Umar Thalib was forced to flee because the Japanese were threatening to arrest him on the grounds of his refusal to perform the symbolic bowing (*saikere*). In fact, he had already been arrested for a few months before moving to Malang. It is said that Umar Thalib was engaged in a war against the British troops that landed in Surabaya on 10 November 1945, by spearheading a militia group whose membership comprised Hadrami youths in East Java. After the revolution for Indonesian independence, he became engaged in politics, becoming a Masyumi

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[12] These reformists initially emerged in West Sumatra, and were generally people returned from the Middle East, see Noer (1973), pp. 31-42.

[13] Mandal (1997), p. 196.

[14] On this organization, see Noer (1973), pp. 58-63; Mobini-Kesheh (1999), pp. 36-41.

[15] For a detailed discussion on the conflict between *sayyid*s and non-*sayyid*s, see Mobini-Kesheh (1999), pp. 9-107.

leader in Malang. Later, he became active in the Muhammadiyah branch office of East Java, where he served as the head of its *tarjīh* (Islamic legal) commission.

Ja'far, the seventh son of Umar Thalib, was born in 1961 from Umar Thalib's marriage to Badriyah Saleh, who was also from a Hadrami family. He had a hard upbringing under the influence of his father's character. In his family, he was the only son to study at a religious school, so that he became the crucible into which all the ambitions of his father were poured. When still a child, he was forced to learn Arabic under the direct supervision of his father. For him, learning Arabic under such circumstances was no different from a boxer's training. 'It was really a rough undertaking', he recalled. Frequently, he was beaten with rattan sticks when he failed to memorize certain Arabic words. Despite the harshness, he survived and quickly mastered Arabic. When he was seven years old, he went to a primary school in his native town, Malang.

Having completed his early education, Ja'far Umar Thalib continued his studies at secondary school, for which he chose the Pendidikan Guru Agama Negeri (State Islamic Teachers Training School, PGAN) located in the same city. His father wanted him to be a teacher of religious instructions at public schools. His zest for participating in organizational activities began to develop. Besides taking part in activities of the intra-student organization, Ja'far Umar Thalib immersed himself in an external student organization, Ikatan Pelajar al-Irsyad (al-Irsyad Student Association), continuing his family's tradition of devoting their lives to al-Irsyad. The puritanical atmosphere of al-Irsyad undoubtedly played a role in forming the personality of Ja'far Umar Thalib.

Persis Legacy

Ja'far Umar Thalib refined his ideas of Islamic reform in another reformist organization, Persatuan Islam (Persis), established in 1923 in Bandung by a group of Muslims under the leadership of Haji Zamzam and Haji Muhammad Yunus.[16] Its existence was solidified by Ahmad Hassan, originally a Singaporean preacher of Tamil descent known as the main thinker and ideologue of Persis.[17] Like al-Irsyad, Persis was famous for its conservatism in rejecting all forms of innovations and superstitions in Muslim religious beliefs and practices. Its main concern was to disseminate ideas of reform by organizing public meetings and debates and by opening schools adopting modern subjects. In order

[16] As for the history of this organization, see Howard M. Federspiel, *Islam and Ideology in the Emerging Indonesian State: The Persatuan Islam, 1923-1957* (Leiden: Brill, 2000). See also Dadan Wildan, *Pasang Surut Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam di Indonesia (Potret Perjalanan Sejarah Organisasi Persatuan Islam (Persis)* (Bandung: Persis Press, 2000).

[17] Concerning the legal thoughts of this figure, see Akhmad Minhaji, *Ahmad Hassan and Islamic Legal Reform in Indonesia (1887-1958)*, PhD Dissertation (Montreal: McGill University, 1995).

to accelerate the spread of these ideas it published pamphlets, periodicals and books.[18]

Since its formation, the political nature of Persis has been prominent, holding that Muslims cannot remain aloof from politics because they have a permanent duty to regain the lost triumph of Islam.[19] The engagement of Persis members in *realpolitik* began with their close involvement with Sarekat Islam (Islamic League, SI), the first Muslim political movement in Indonesia, and led Persis into forming a bloc active in criticizing nationalism, communism and secularism, the main themes of Sarekat Islam. Persis subsequently immersed itself in the political activities of the Masyumi. It actively supported the Sabilillah and Hizbullah, paramilitary organizations set up by the Masyumi in the years preceding independence. As a result of its engagement in the organization, a number of its cadres, such as Muhammad Natsir and Isa Ansary, emerged as leading figures in the political discourse of early independent Indonesia. They were at the forefront of support for the Masyumi's struggle to implement the Jakarta Charter.[20]

The implementation of *sharīʻa* is among Persis's most important goals and considered as an obligation that must be fulfilled[21] to save Islam from the grasp of the hegemony of nationalism, communism and secularism.[22] During the liberal democracy period, Persis emerged as the main advocate of *sharīʻa* in the campaign pioneered by the Masyumi. Its leaders did not lose sight of the goal of establishing an Indonesian state based on Islamic principles. They repeatedly tried to propose the Jakarta Charter as the foundation of the state. This emphasis on the implementation of *sharīʻa*, according to Howard M. Federspeil (2000), resembles the Islamist ideas developed by Abul Aʻla al-Mawdudi:

> The efforts of Mawdudi and his Jamaʻat-i Islami in the Pakistan period of Mawdudi's career are in some regards similar to that of the effort of the Persatuan Islam in that both suddenly existed in new nations that tested the assumptions of their belief patterns. In both cases, the stress on Islamic moorings of the state had to incorporate new thinking because their countrymen had founded states based on secular models… Both questioned secular nationalist assumptions about the new states and attempted through political means to bring about the adoption of Islamic law and other ideas they held to be part of an Islamic state.[23]

[18] Federspiel (2000), pp. 100-17. See also Wildan (2000), pp. 49-75.
[19] Federspiel (2000), pp. 89-90.
[20] Ibid., p. 119.
[21] Interview with Shiddieq Amien, Persis chairman, Jakarta, 12 April 2003.
[22] Wildan (2000), p. 40.
[23] Federspiel (2000), pp. 290-1.

Ja'far Umar Thalib's acquaintance with Persis began when he decided to enroll in one of its most famous *pesantrens*, located in Bangil, a small town to the east to Surabaya, in 1981. He chose this *pesantren* after deciding to quit the *Tarbiya* Faculty of the Muhammadiyah University of Malang, where he had spent about one year, having been disappointed by the quality of its religious instruction. At that time, this *pesantren* was led by Abdul Qadir Hasan, a son of its founder, Ahmad Hassan. Ja'far Umar Thalib states that he chose the *pesantren* on the advice of his father, who enjoyed a friendship with Abdul Qadir Hassan.

The *pesantren* was established in 1940 following Ahmad Hassan's move from Bandung to Bangil, where he dedicated the rest of his life to teaching. Several Persis leaders, including Muhammad Natsir and Muhammad Salim Nabhan, were involved in its establishment. The main aim of the *pesantren* is 'to produce Muslim preachers who can play an important role in combating the *bid'a* and *khurafa* proliferating in society, under the slogan of a return to the Qur'an and the Sunna'. To achieve this aim, the *pesantren* has five main agenda points, including (1) implanting the spirit of jihad and *ijtihād*; (2) implanting the puritanical spirit of the Qur'an and the Sunna, (3) implanting a corrective attitude to all notions opposing the Qur'an and the Sunna; (4) implementing the principles of Islamic law; and (5) developing the tradition of dialogue.[24]

One of the *pesantren*'s teachers, Umar Fananie, had perceived the militant character of Ja'far Umar Thalib as soon as he enrolled. In his eyes, Ja'far Umar Thalib was not able to keep silent whenever he witnessed whatever he considered to be *bid'a.* He often criticized his own teachers as too benign in combating different forms of deviations from the Qur'an and Sunna. But he also asserted that Ja'far Umar Thalib was a diligent student who spent much of his time in the library, which succeeded in winning a considerable degree of trust from Abdul Qadir Hassan, who appointed him his assistant in answering various religious questions of readers of *al-Muslimun*, the periodical associated with the *pesantren*.[25]

Al-Muslimun is the most important periodical that has ever been produced by Persis. This periodical is particularly concerned with various issues related to Islamic law. Question and Answer (*Sual-Djawab*) handled by Abdul Qadir Hassan, usually appears among the first pages, followed by a discussion about the Prophetic Tradition (*Ḥadīth*) and Quranic Exegesis (*Tafsīr*).[26]

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[24] Pesantren Persis, *Sejarah Ringkas Pesantren Persis Bangil* (Bangil: Pesantren Persis, 1986), pp. 9-10.

[25] Interview with Umar Fananie, one of the long-standing dedicated teachers of the *pesantren*, Bangil, 24 February 2003.

[26] For a detailed discussion on the profile of this periodical during the first six years of its existence (1954-1960), see Howard Federspiel, 'The Political and Social Language of Indonesian Muslims: The Case of Al-Muslimun', *Indonesia*, 38 (October 1984), pp. 55-73.

Although these columns constitute the main contents of *al-Muslimun*, comments on current issues such as *khilāfa*, secularization, the putative Zionist conspiracy, Christianization and the like have also become sources of its attraction. Launched in 1954 by Abdullah Musa, a son-in-law of Ahmad Hassan, *al-Muslimun* ground to a halt in 1960, though it appeared in fits and starts throughout the decade. At the beginning of the 1970s Abdullah Musa asked his brother, Tajuddin Musa, to manage it, and it once again prospered. In the late 1980s its popularity reached its peak, printing as many as 20,000 copies per edition.[27]

Ja'far Umar Thalib spent only one year and a half in the *pesantren*. He dropped out in 1985 shortly after Abdul Qadir Hassan died. Being informed about the advantages of study at LIPIA, he decided to go to Jakarta to register himself at the institute and was accepted. Besides learning Arabic, one of his salient interests at that time was reading *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān*, the *tafsīr* (exegesis of the Qur'an) that was the *magnum opus* by Sayyid Quṭb. He claims to have been plagued by the thoughts of this ideologue before becoming fully aware of some of their deviations from the true path of Islam. While a student, Ja'far Umar Thalib was active in the central leadership of the al-Irsyad Student Association. Eventually, he was appointed its leader, spearheading its opposition to the Pancasila, and was detained several times for interrogation by military intelligence agents who accused him of being involved in the Tanjung Priok Affair.

Ja'far Umar Thalib dropped out of LIPIA, having become embroiled in a conflict with one of his teachers, Muḥammad Yasīn al-Khattīb. He repudiated the subject al-Khattīb taught, arguing that this Iraqi teacher taught a book devoid of Qur'anic and Sunna references, *Matn al-Ghāya wa al-Taqrīb* by Aḥmad bin Ḥasan Abū Shujā' al-Isfahānī (1053-1106). It is the shortest and simplest text of traditional Shafi'i *fiqh* studied in the traditional Nahdlatul Ulama *pesantrens*. However, the then director of LIPIA, 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Abd Allāh al-'Amr, offered him an opportunity to go abroad. In 1986, he received a scholarship on the recommendation of the director to study at the Mawdudi Islamic Institute in Lahore, Pakistan. The story of Ja'far Umar Thalib's experience at this institute is truncated. He claims to have had an opportunity to take courses only in the first semester, applying himself to basic subjects of Islamic studies.

The Mawdudi Islamic Institute is an Islamic educational institute directly linked to the Jama'at-i Islami party of Pakistan. It was originally set up in 1982 within the headquarters of the Jama'at-i Islami, the Mansoora complex, under the initiative of Mawdudi, who received support of the Saudi Arabian government. Its curriculum combines both non-religious and religious subjects, including English, Economics, Political science, Sociology, History, Qur'anic Studies, Prophetic Tradition Studies, Islamic Law, Islamic Theology and Ethics

[27] Interview with Shadid Abdullah Musa, Bangil, 24 February 2003.

and Morals. The non-religious subjects are taught in English, the religious in Arabic. Its main goal is to produce cadres for Islamist movements prepared to spearhead a global Islamic resurgence.[28]

Afghan Experience

After less than a year at the Mawdudi Islamic Institute, Ja'far Umar Thalib volunteered to join the *mujāhids* in the Afghan War. This was not surprising, as many other students were also volunteering. First, he reported to al-Khayriyya military training camp in Peshawar, which became the headquarters of voluntary fighters from Syria.[29] It is of interest to note that the Rābiṭat and other Arab Islamist organizations responsible for recruiting voluntary fighters worldwide frequently covered up their true purpose by claiming that they were taking religious courses at different educational institutions in Pakistan. Once there, however, it is alleged they were diverted to regional camps where they received intensive instruction in the techniques of unconventional warfare.[30]

In 1987, Ja'far Umar Thalib began his engagement in the Afghan War. He claims to have initially joined the Hizb-i Islami led by Gulbudin Hekmatyar, before being sent to assist Jami'at-i Islami led by Abdul Rasul Sayyaf. It was common for voluntary fighters rotate from one faction to another in assisting Afghan *mujāhids*.[31] For ideological reasons, however, Ja'far Umar Thalib eventually preferred to support Jama'at al-Da'wa ila al-Qur'an wa Ahl-i Hadith. It was a strict *Salafi* faction and Saudi Arabian 'principality' led by Jamil al-Rahman. This faction had special relations with Pakistani Ahl-i Hadith, a reformist movement founded in the Indian Subcontinent in the nineteenth century that shares many similarities with Wahhabism, particularly in terms of its repudiation of traditional practices, such as visiting the Prophet's grave.[32]

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[28] On this institute, see Farish A. Noor, 'Victims of Superpower Politics? The Uncertain Fate of ASEAN students in the *Madrasahs* of Pakistan in the Age of the "War Against Terror"', paper presented at the conference on *'The Madrasah in Asia, Transnationalism and their Alleged or Real Political Linkages'*, jointly organised by the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM, Leiden) and the Zentrum fur Moderner Orient (Centre for Modern Orient Studies, ZMO, Berlin), in Leiden on 23-25 May 2004.

[29] See Gatra, 'Putra Malang Alumnus Perang Afghanistan', *Gatra*, 5 August 2001.

[30] This information is put forward by Peter Chalk writing on militant Islamic extremism in the Southern Philippines. See Peter Chalk, 'Militant Islamic Extremism in the Southern Philippine', in Jason F. Isaacson and Colin Rubenstein (eds.), *Islam in Asia: Canging Political Realities* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2000), p. 198.

[31] For a detailed discussion on this issue, see Olivier Roy, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan*, second edition (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990). See also Rashid (2001).

[32] Concerning the Ahl al-Hadith, see Barbara D. Metcalf, 'Traditionalist Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs', *ISIM Papers* (Leiden: ISIM, 2002), p. 6. See also Mariam Abou Zahab and Olivier Roy, *Islamist Networks: The Afghan-Pakistan Connection* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), pp. 20-21.

Because of its similarities to Wahhabism, Ahl-i Hadith has been criticized by the *'ulamā'* of the Hanafite, the dominant *madhhab* in the Subcontinent, as a hidden front of the Wahhabis, whom they regard as enemies of Islam for their fierce opposition to the adoration of the Prophet and the Sufi saints and to the practice of *taqlīd*. The same criticism came from the Deoband *'ulamā',* who, although they adopted ideas of Islamic reform and was thus ideologically close to Wahhabism, accused Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb of preaching false belief. Recently, their conflict flared up during Ahl-i Hadith's campaign to denounce its ideological rivals, which cannot be disassociated with its attempts to win the support of Saudi Arabia.[33] Jamil al-Rahman himself was a graduate of a religious school of Ahl al-Hadith in Panjpir sponsored directly by Saudi Arabia. Before establishing this faction he had joined Hekmatyar's Hizb-i Islami.[34] Jama'at al-Da'wa was also linked to Laskar-i-Tayyiba, an offshoot of Markaz Da'wa wal Irshad, which was ideologically affiliated to Ahl al-Hadith.[35]

Jama'at al-Da'wa set up its base in Kunar, an isolated province beyond the control of central authority. Given its closeness to Wahhabism many Salafi jihad volunteers from Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Yemen preferred to join this faction. With the support of private sources in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, it evolved into a strong faction that seized overwhelming control of Kunar and established a *Shūra* Council there. Surprisingly perhaps, it applied the doctrine of *takfīr*, requiring Muslims to excommunicate any ruler considered apostate and resort to violence, if necessary. Afghans who lived in the areas controlled by the government were treated as infidels subject to the rules of *futuḥāt* (conquest), including killing men who resisted and taking women and children as prisoners.[36]

Of all the factions, Jama'at al-Da'wa developed the most hostile attitude towards non-Muslims and the West, written off as the enemies of Islam. Its fighters frequently attacked journalists and humanitarian workers, whom they accused of being agents of the West. But this faction's engagement on the political scene of Afghanistan ended with the withdrawal of the Soviet Union; it retreated from the political quarrel for power. Jamil al-Rahman himself then became the target of assassination by his rivals. Its veterans devoted their time to conducting what they believed to be *da'wa* activities. Resorting to iconoclasm, they destroyed statues and monuments and attacked local religious practices they

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[33] See Yoginder Sikand, 'Stoking the Flames: Intra-Muslim Rivalries in India and the Saudi Connection', paper presented at the Workshop on *South-South Linkages in Islam: Translocal Agents, Ideas, Lifeworlds (19th and 20th Centuries)*, held by Centre for Modern Oriental Studies (ZMO) in Berlin on 5 and 6 November 2004.

[34] Roy (1996), p. 118.

[35] Zahab and Roy (2002), p. 38. For further information about the Lashkar-i-Taiba, see Saeed Shafqat, 'Religious Groups: Rise of Da'wa-ul-Irshad/Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and the Problem of Democratic Framework in Pakistan', unpublished paper presented in the seminar organized by Pakistan Study Groups, Paris on 13 December 1999.

[36] Rubin (1997), pp. 196-7.

considered anathema to Islam.[37] As indicated in the previous chapter, the name of Jamil al-Rahman was later immortalized by the Indonesian Salafis as the name of their mosques.

The influence of the Afghan episode on Ja'far Umar Thalib cannot be underestimated. This experience allowed him to make contact with other voluntary fighters and explore ideas and ideologies in an environment based on the ethos of jihad. He claims to have shared a tent with Abdul Rasul Sayyaf[38] and to have had contact with Osama bin Lāden.[39] Unquestionably, Afghanistan provided him with the opportunity to learn how to use weapons and explosives, and taught him a variety of war tactics and strategies. A number of his followers have proudly recounted the ability of Ja'far Umar Thalib to use various modern weapons and his claim to have heroically shot down five Soviet helicopters with one missile. The experience also stimulated his spirit of combat as well as his militancy to what he perceived as Western-inspired secular tyranny. No less important is that during the war he directly witnessed how Wahhabi doctrines were implemented by Afghan *mujāhids* and voluntary jihad fighters associated with the Wahhabi-supported factions. All these things undoubtedly helped to explain the direction he took upon his return to Indonesia in 1989.

Pesantren Al-Irsyad Tengaran

Upon return, Ja'far Umar Thalib was immediately involved in teaching activities in a newly established *pesantren* affiliated with al-Irsyad. This *pesantren* is located in Tengaran, Salatiga, around 100 kilometres from Semarang, and is known as Pesantren al-Irsyad Tengaran. On the basis of the recommendation of the then LIPIA director, 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Abd Allāh al-'Amr, he was appointed both the director and teacher of the *pesantren*. Ja'far Umar Thalib was not alone. In running this *pesantren*, he was assisted by Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas, another scholar of Hadrami descent who had just completed his studies with Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn, a prominent religious figure who runs a well-known Salafi teaching centre in Najran, located in the southern part of Saudi Arabia near its border with Yemen.

The return of Ja'far Umar Thalib was welcomed enthusiastically by some segments in al-Irsyad membership. Since the beginning of the 1980s, discontent emerged within this organization; some of its important personalities felt it was undergoing an identity crisis. As far as they were concerned, al-Irsyad, which had been prominent in the dynamics of Islamic discourse in Indonesia, had long lost its vitality in conjunction with the marginalization of

[37] Ibid., p. 167.

[38] A number of Ja'far Umar Thalib's lieutenants recounted the experience of their leader to have shared a tent with Abdul Rasul Sayyaf in various interviews with me.

[39] On this information, see C. Richard Paddock, 'Laskar Jihad Leader Offers His Views', in *www.thedailycamera.com*.

Muslim politics by Soeharto. More than that, they argued that the young generation of al-Irsyad was no longer capable of reading and speaking Arabic. In their analysis, this problem was partly arising from the fading reputation of al-Irsyad schools, which had failed to compete with other private schools in improving their educational quality. At the same time, they regretted that al-Irsyad, as an Islamic organization concerned with the progress of Islamic education, did not possess any *pesantren* regarded as a centre of excellence for the production of religious authorities.[40]

The history of the Pesantren al-Irsyad Tengaran reflects to some extent the concern of some al-Irsyad leaders with this matter. Its establishment started with an initiative of Umar Abdat, a Hadrami businessman and the chairman of the al-Irsyad branch office in Semarang. His inspiration was a discussion with Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi, the head of the famous modernist Pesantren Gontor in Ponorogo, East Java,[41] while he was visiting his son, Tariq Umar Abdat, who was studying there. In reply to the curiosity expressed by Umar Abdat, Abdullah Syukri Zarkasyi said, ‘Actually it is we who should learn from you how to teach Arabic’. This discussion eventually led Umar Abdat to establish the *pesantren*, which he intended to counterbalance the domination of Gontor.[42]

Nevertheless, the realization of his dream was not as easy as had been expected, since the central leadership of al-Irsyad was unwilling to provide any support. Umar Abdat did not give up. He submited his proposal to ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ‘Abd Allāh al-‘Amr, who welcomed it with enthusiasm and gave him a recommendation to meet a high official of the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education. He apparently perceived Abdat’s initiative as an opportunity to start paying more serious attention to the development of Islamic *da‘wa* and education. There is an impression among some al-Irsyad leaders that Saudi Arabia considered that its on-going cooperation with al-Irsyad had hitherto produced no significant contribution for the development of the two fields.[43] This concern, as I have pointed out in the previous chapter, developed alongside Saudi Arabian efforts to increase the number of Indonesian students studying in the Middle East.

Umar Abdat’s visit to Saudi Arabia proved fruitful. He received Rp. 40 million with which he set about establishing the *pesantren*. In the process of building the *pesantren,* two emissaries from the ministry came to carry out an inspection. These two emissaries gave Umar Abdat their approval and he was promised additional financial support. Eventually, a two-storey building was

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[40] Interview with Husein Maskaty and M. Masdun Pranoto, Jakarta, 14 March 2003.

[41] Concerning this pesantren, see Husnan Bey Fananie, *Modernism in Islamic Education in Indonesia and India: a Case Study of the Pondok Modern Gontor and Aligarh*, MA thesis (Leiden: Leiden University, 1997), see also Lance Castles, *Pondok Pesantren, Kiai dan Ulama dengan Sejarah, Jasa dan Fungsinya dalam Pembangunan: Sebuah Antologi* (Ponorogo: Pondok Modern Gontor, 1973).

[42] Interview with Tariq Umar Abdat, Semarang, 18 February 2003.

[43] Interview with Ali Bin Bur, former secretary general of al-Irsyad, Jakarta, 17 March 2003.

finished in 1987 and teaching began in 1988 with forty students. Mahmud Sulhan, a graduate of the Pesantren Gontor and the Umm al-Qura University, Mecca, was appointed its director. The curriculum of the *pesantren* combined religious and non-religious subjects, with an emphasis on the teaching of Arabic.[44]

Figure I: Ja'far Umar Thalib, the commander-in-chief of Laskar Jihad (Courtesy of *Tempo*, 20 May 2001)

Only one year after this opening, two emissaries of 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Abd Allāh al-'Amr visited Tengaran to observe the development of the *pesantren*. Before returning to Jakarta, both emissaries warned Tariq Umar Abdat, Umar Abdat's son representing his ailing father, that 'Sulhan, the then *pesantren* director, only looks like a Salafi, in fact he is a Nahdiyin, an adherent of the Nahdlatul Ulama'. A few days after, 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Abd Allāh al-'Amr ordered Umar Abdat to replace Mahmud Sulhan with someone he would appoint.[45] Shortly after that, Ja'far Umar Thalib and Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas came to

[44] Interview with Nizar Abdul Jabal, the Director of the Pesantren, Salatiga, 19 February 2003.

[45] Interview with Tariq Umar Abdat, Semarang, 18 February 2003.

the *pesantren* charged with the mission to introduce changes to conform more closely with Wahhabite doctrines.

The attempts of Ja'far Umar Thalib and Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas to introduce changes represented the growing aspiration of al-Irsyad to return to the original spirit of reform. This organization was perceived to have deviated from its original mission, namely, to purify Indonesian Islam from corrupting innovations, superstitions and polytheism. Such an aspiration was particularly expressed by young cadres who had completed their studies in the Middle East.[46] They acted as the main supporters of Farouk Zein Badjabir, who succeeded Geys Amar as the chairman of al-Irsyad in 1999 through an extraordinary session held in Tawangmangu, Central Java.[47] Another Muslim reformist organization, Persis, had loudly voiced a similar demand. Some segments of its membership, particularly those graduating from Middle Eastern universities, have been persistent in their claim that the role of Persis as a reform organization has terminated, because of its neglect of the original mission to purify Muslim beliefs and practices and its failure to contribute significantly to the political dynamics of the *umma*.[48]

The arrival of Ja'far Umar Thalib and Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas did indeed bring some fundamental changes to the *pesantren*. Both taught students Wahhabi doctrines in a more austere manner, forbidding the posting of human or animal pictures, paying respects to the flag, watching television, smoking, or even listening to music. They were also obliged to grow long beards and wear an Arab-style uniform.[49] The doctrines implanted by Ja'far Umar Thalib and Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas had a great impact on the students. When returning home for the holidays, they shocked parents forced to witness such actions as removing pictures, radios and televisions. Thoroughly shocked, many of their parents came to al-Irsyad branch offices to question the education received by their children.[50]

With Ja'far Umar Thalib and Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas preoccupied with their task of popularizing Wahhabi doctrines, al-Irsyad sent Yusuf Usman Baisa, another Saudi Arabian returnee who had just completed his studies at the Imām Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd University, Mecca, to teach in the *pesantren* on the

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[46] Interview with A. Farid Okbah, Jakarta, 28 October 2002.

[47] This succession resulted in a serious conflict in al-Irsyad, which is now divided into two: al-Irsyad Kramat Raya and al-Irsyad Jatinegara. Interview with Farouk Zein Badjabir, Jakarta, 14 March 2003.

[48] Interview with M. Taufik Rahman, Asep S. Minbar and Badri Chaeruman, Bandung, 7 April 2003. A group of the young generation of Persis has published a book entitled, 'Is Persis ready to be a reform organization again?: an attempt to promote the discourse of new Persis'. See Lutfi Lukman Hakim (ed.), *Siapkah Persis Menjadi Mujaddid Lagi?: Upaya Mewujudkan Wacana Persis Baru* (Bandung: Alqaprint, 2000).

[49] Interview with Azhar Cholid Sef, a former student of Ja'far Umar Thalib at the Pesantren al-Irsyad Tengaran, Jakarta, 9 February 2003

[50] Interview with Tariq Omar Abdat, Semarang, 18 February 2003.

basis of a LIPIA recommendation. He was appointed deputy-director, replacing Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas.[51] In addition to teaching activities, these three teachers took part in the dissemination of Salafi messages among university students, as indicated earlier. The latter even became their main concern, putting their main tasks as teachers in the *pesantren* aside. All of them were active in fulfilling the invitations from the early proponents of the Salafi movement to deliver religious lectures and sermons in different cities, including Yogyakarta, Solo and Semarang. It is likely that they did not want to be left behind in the attempt to spread Wahhabi doctrines, which had been pioneered by people who did not bear any Hadraminess, such as Abu Nida and Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin. As a result, the *pesantren* emerged as one of the most important links in the dissemination of the Salafi movement in Indonesia.

Criticism by the students' parents was treated with disdain by Ja'far Umar Thalib. Undeterred, he continued his leadership style and pursued his ambition to impose ideological uniformity on his students. It was not long before Ja'far Umar Thalib's relations with al-Irsyad quickly degenerated. The anxiety of students' parents about the impact on their children grew proportionally. They demanded the al-Irsyad branch office in Semarang, which was directly responsible for the *pesantren*, to curb this militant tendency. In response to their pressure, the branch organized a meeting in Pekalongan to deal with the Tengaran affair. Attended by several representatives of the central leadership of al-Irsyad, the meeting decided to replace Ja'far Umar Thalib with Yusuf Usman Baisa. But Ja'far Umar Thalib rejected this decision. He considered it unfair and decided to resign. His resignation was followed by those of Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas and Yusuf Usman Baisa.[52]

The leadership vacuum was not protracted, as Tariq Umar Abdat, the then chairman of the al-Irsyad branch of Semarang, succeeded in persuading Yusuf Usman Baisa to come back to the *pesantren* and serve as its director. This enraged Ja'far Umar Thalib. He saw Yusuf Usman Baisa's decision as a betrayal. The same feeling of disgruntlement afflicted Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas, who cut off contact with Yusuf Usman Baisa. Under the leadership of Yusuf Usman Baisa, who received full support from al-Irsyad, the *pesantren* has developed very fast. New buildings were finished, completing the existing buildings, thanks to financial support from Saudi Arabia. In exchange, Saudi Arabia insisted on the right to interfere in the internal affairs in the *pesantren* and determine its curriculum. Since 1994, LIPIA has even received visiting teachers from Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries. Hundreds of its

[51] Interview with Yusuf Usman Baisa, Cirebon, 17 February 2003.
[52] Interview with Yusuf Usman Baisa, Cirebon, 15 February 2003.

graduates continued their studies at LIPIA or at universities in Saudi Arabia, particularly the Medina Islamic University.[53]

Revitalizing the Yemeni Connection

Having decided to quit the *pesantren* in 1990, Ja'far Umar Thalib went to Yemen, allegedly using the connections he had built during his engagement in the Afghan War. His journey to Yemen had a specific aim, namely to deepen his insights into Wahhabi teachings with a Yemeni teacher, Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī, known as a Salafi ideologue *par excellence* bearing the honorific title of 'Muḥaddith al-Yamān' (the specialist in the Prophetic Traditions in Yemen). However, Ja'far did not really have much of an opportunity to study with him. As soon as he arrived in Yemen, he succumbed to a serious illness. After three months, he decided to go home. But this short period in Yemen left a deep impression on him. He could not forget the generosity of Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī, who once came to his room to give him some camel's milk.

The name of Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī has gained recognition as a Salafi authority since the early 1980s. His knowledge of Wahhabism was forged by two decades of study in Saudi Arabia. Initially, he studied in the Salafi teaching centre developed by Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn in Najran, before enrolling at the Medina Islamic University.[54] During this period of study, he attended the *halqas* of prominent Salafi authorities, such as 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Abd Allāh Bin Bāz and Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī. Following an accusation of his engagement in the Juhaymān al-'Utaiby-led attack on the Meccan sanctuary, he was arrested. Having languished in a Saudi prison for several months, he was released thanks to the intervention of Bin Bāz, and subsequently deported to his native land.[55]

Back in Yemen, Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī began to spread Wahhabism first by establishing the Madrasa Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Khayriyya in Dammaj, his native tribal region east of Sa'da. In his efforts to spread Wahhabism, he faced various challenges, particularly from the foes of Wahhabis, namely Shafi'is, Isma'ilis and Zaydis, who have traditionally dominated Sa'da. They did not

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[53] Interview with Nizar Abdul Jabal, 19 February 2003. For a profile of this *pesantren,* see *Ma'had al-Irsyad al-Islamy*, brochure (Salatiga: Ma'had al-Irsyad al-Islamy, 2001). See also www.alirsyad.8m.net.

[54] One of the most important works of al-`Uthaymin is *Aqīda Ahl al-Sunna wa'l Jamā'a,* which is translated into Bahasa Indonesia to become *Aqidah Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah* (Jakarta: Yayasan al-Sofwa, 1995).

[55] Bernard Haykel, 'The Salafis in Yemen at a Crossroads: an obituary of Shaykh Muqbil al-Wadi'i of Dammaj (d. 1422/2001)', *Jemen Report*, 2 (October 2002); cf. Francois Burgat and Muhammad Sbitli, 'Les Salafis au Yemen ou… La Modernisation Malgre Tout', *Chroniques Yemenites*, 2002. According to Burgat and Sbitli, Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī had been for the first time arrested in 1975 long before the Juhayman-led attacks on the grand mosque. In 1976 he was detained again for the second time and only released in 1978 because of the intervention of Bin Bāz. He himself claimed that he was the victim of manipulation of Juhayman followers.

want the doctrines taught by Muqbil to prevail and usurp their dominant position. In fact, he had felt the bitterness of the challenges posed by his foes, particularly the Zaydi *sayyids*, even before his departure to Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, he survived his detractors thanks to the support of his fellow tribesmen, Wādi'īs, who provided protection for the continuation of his *da'wa* activities. He even succeeded in developing his learning centre to the extent that it has emerged as one of the most important learning sites for Salafis from all over the world. Tens of thousands of students have studied with him, a significant number of whom have come from such diverse destinations as Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Indonesia, as well as Belgium, the United States and the United Kingdom.[56]

Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī's relations with Saudi Arabia seem complicated but dynamic. Saudi prison in 1979 was certainly an ineradicable nightmare. It is said that he has often launched harsh criticism of the Saudi Arabian royal family and has once even considered this regime to have been trapped into infidelity. Despite such hindrances, his concern with the spread of Wahhabism has brought him close to Saudi Arabia. The Holy Mosque Establishment, a charitable organization sponsored by Saudi Arabian government, has officially supported all institutions of learning associated with him, including the al-Khayr mosque and Islamic teaching centres scattered in Dammaj, Ma'ābir, Ma'rib and al-Hudaida.[57] After his death, these centres fragmented. Conflict around the rights to inherit control over them flared up among Muqbil's main disciples, particularly between Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin 'Alī al-Hujurī and Abū Ḥasan 'Alī 'Abd al-Ḥāmid, who are attached to the Islamic teaching centres in Dammaj and Ma'rib, respectively.[58]

In many cases, Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī has adopted a position that favours Saudi Arabia. He was persistent, for instance, in his criticism of the Iranian Revolution, about which he has written a book entitled *al-Ilhād al-Khomeini fī Arḍ al-Ḥaramayn* (Impudence of Khomeini on the Land of the Two Holy Sanctuaries). Similarly, during the civil war in 1994, he encouraged his followers to be active on the battlefronts against the Marxist-Leninist powers. This engagement made his name on the Yemeni political scene. Even when the battle was over, his presence remained strong. He was involved in cooperation with the *al-Iṣlaḥ* party, which took upon itself a mission to break the remaining powers of the Marxist regime in former South Yemen.[59] It must be noted that

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[56]Ibid.

[57]See Quintan Wiktorowicz, 'The New Global Threat, Transnational Salafis and Jihad', *Middle East Policy*, 8: 4 (December 2001), p. 32.

[58] For a detailed discussion on this fragmentation, see Burgat and Sbitli (2002), pp. 21-2.

[59] As for the linkage between the Yemeni *Salafi* and al-Islah, see Eric Watkins, 'Islamism and Tribalism in Yemen', in Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (eds.), *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Colorado and Oxford: Westview Press, 1996), pp. 215-225. See also Paul Dresch and Bernard Haykel, 'Stereotypes and Political Styles: Islamists and Tribesfolk in Yemen', *The International Journal of Middle East Studies* 27 (1995).

the *Iṣlaḥ* party was extremely active in providing shelter and succour to Afghan war veterans.[60]

Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī has also reinforced his relationship with Saudi Arabia by giving support to Bin Bāz and defending him from the attacks of Muḥammad ibn Surūr al-Nayef Zayn al-'Ābidīn and like-minded people who have condemned his *fatwās* legitimizing the arrival of American troops in the Kingdom. He has even inveighed against Muḥammad ibn Surūr, whom he accused of committing *takfīr*. His effort to support Bin Bāz tied him to Bin Bāz defenders, including Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, Rabī' ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī and Zayd Muḥammad ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī. They are important Saudi Salafi authorities outside the Hai'at Kibār al-'Ulamā' circle, with whom Ja'far Umar Thalib had also established linkages. Every time he visited Mecca and Medina, particularly during the *hajj* season, he attended *halqas* held by these *'ulamā'*.

Born in Albania, Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī had studied and lived in Damascus for a long time. During a brutal campaign pursued by the Asad regime in Syria to crush Islamist movements, he moved to Jordan, where he became the most important proselytizer among the Salafis. At the beginning of the 1990s, in the upsurge of Islamist activism resulting from the Gulf War, he was banned from delivering sermons and preaching by the Jordanian authorities.[61] Finally, he moved to Saudi Arabia and established his position there as one of the most renowned Salafi authorities, known for his expertise in the Prophetic Tradition. He has written some works on the validity of *Ḥadīths*, including *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥa* (The Valid Chains of the Authority of the *Ḥadīths*). In his efforts to defend Bin Bāz, he has written a number of articles published in *al-Muslimūn,* the Saudi Arabia-based Salafi journal.[62]

To serve the same purpose, Rabī' ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī has written various books, such as *Jamā'a Wāḥida Lā Jamā'a wa Ṣirāṭ Wāḥida Lā 'Ash'ara* (One Community, Not Communities, One way, Not Ten) and *Al-Naṣr al-'Azīz 'alā al-Radd al-Wajīz* (The Mighty Victory on The Concise Refusal). In these two books he launches criticisms and condemnations of Muḥammad ibn Surūr and like-minded people. More important, he has written *Al-'Awāsim Mā fī Kutub Sayyid Quṭb* (Deviations in Sayyid Quṭb's Books)*,* criticizing the books of Quṭb, main references used by the Saudi Arabian detractors. He claims many of Quṭb's

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[60] See James Bruce, 'The Azzam Brigades: Arab Veterans of the Afghan War', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, 7: 4 (April 1995), pp. 178-180.

[61] Wiktorowicz points out the role played by al-Albani in the proliferation of the Salafi movement in Jordan. See Quintan Wiktorowicz, 'The Salafi Movement in Jordan', *International Journal Middle East Studies*, 32 (2000), p. 222.

[62] A dozen al-Albani's books have been translated into Bahasa Indonesia, including his *fatwa* compilation, *Fatawa al-Shaikh al-Albani wa Muqarranatuha bi Fatawa al-'Ulama*. The Indonesian edition of this book appears with the title *Fatwa-Fatwa Syaikh Albani* (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2003).

thoughts contradict the true path of Islam. He is a lecturer of *Ḥadīth* at the Medina Islamic University and was reportedly engaged in the Afghan War.

Zayd Muḥammad ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī is another staunch defender of Saudi Arabia and its religious establishment. He also works as a lecturer at the Medina Islamic University. He has written several books, such as *Al-Baḥth al-Wajīz fī Nuṣrat al-Haqq al-'Azīz* (A Concise Analysis in Supporting the Mighty Truth) and *Al-Irhāb wa 'Atharuhu 'Alā al-Afrād wa'l-Umam* (Terrorism and Its Influences on Individuals and Nations). In the first book he records the post-Gulf War discourses that developed among Salafis and presents Bin Bāz's answers to the criticisms addressed to him. In the second book, he discredits Bin Bāz's detractors and labels them extremists and terrorists dangerous to Islam.[63]

Ja'far Umar Thalib's decision to study with Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī to some extent revitalized the classical linkage between Indonesia and Yemen. This decision brought him to a country that has long been a source of inspiration for the Indonesian Hadramis. As a diasporic community, the Hadramis consistently retain some cultural attachment with their country of origin. This kind of attachment is always crucial for diasporic communities and their strength usually comes from the identity they bring from their native countries. In his recent provocative contribution, Engseng Ho (2004) describes the Hadrami diaspora across the Indian Ocean as a virtual empire, which over the past half-millennium exerted its political influence in the region through mobile religious, commercial and cultural contacts with natives. Through these contacts the Hadramis themselves became natives and, at the same time, the main players who had 'control' over communication and trade. He argues that the triumph of this diasporic empire confronted a serious challenge when European colonial powers came to the region and tried to exert their political monopolies, if necessary, through violence. The Hadramis reacted to this challenge by calling for jihad and, as a result, resistance against the European colonization erupted in many places under the leadership of the Hadrami diaspora or their scholarly associates.[64]

Perhaps more important, the decision of Ja'far Umar Thalib to study with Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī enabled him to establish a special network of religious authority between the Indonesian and Yemeni Salafis. His primary success was to initiate the cooperation that facilitated the dispatch of hundreds of Indonesian youths to study at the Islamic teaching centres associated with Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī. In so doing, he created an alternative channel for Indonesian Salafis wanting to enrich their insights abroad. This cooperation

[63] This book has been translated into Bahasa Indonesia under the title *Terorisme dalam Tinjauan Islam* (Tegal: Maktabah Salafy Press, 2002) and appeared together with the translation of Rabi' ibn Hadi al-Madkhali's book, *Kekeliruan Pemikiran Sayyid Quthb* (Jakarta: Darul Falah, 2002).

[64] Engseng Ho, 'Empire through Diasporic Eyes: A View from the Other Boat', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46: 2 (April 2004), pp. 210-46.

produced new religious authorities who would play an important role in supporting the activities of Ja'far Umar Thalib to disseminate Salafi messages.

One may question why Ja'far Umar Thalib did not choose to go to Southern Yemen, where the majority of Indonesian Hadramis originated. His decision apparently had to do with the changes taking place on the religious map of the Muslim world as a consequence of the Saudi Arabian campaign for the Wahhabization of the *umma*. Because of this campaign, new centres of Islamic reform have sprung up with special linkages with Saudi Arabia. One such example was Northern Yemen, particularly the area around Dammaj, which emerged as one of the major sites for Salafi teaching centres with Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī as their central figure. To establish contact with Northern Yemen, therefore, means to create a strategic linkage with Saudi Arabia.

The Surūriyya Issue

Upon his return home from Yemen, Ja'far Umar Thalib chose to live in Yogyakarta, complying with Abu Nida's request to strengthen the influence of the movement that he had developed there. As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, both were heavily occupied with the activities of giving lectures, preaching and delivering sermons in Salafi *halqas* and *dauras* organized under the auspices of the As-Sunnah foundation. Given his wide knowledge of the Wahhabi teachings, bolstered by his pronounced oratory skills and distinguished appearance—fluent in Arabic and at ease wearing a *jalabiyya*, turban and long beard—Ja'far Umar Thalib quickly gained fame among the participants of the Salafi *halqas* and *dauras*. To one of his early followers, he perfectly represented the prototype of an authentic *'ālim*;

> 'He has distinguished tone, the fluctuating pitch and tenor speech patterns and uses the learned classical Arabic and an excellent rhetoric. More than that, he is a descendant of *'ulamā'* who has studied with the most outstanding Salafi authority, Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī, and indeed highly fluent in religious matters'.[65]

Aware of his influence, Ja'far Umar Thalib tried to develop his activities even more and attracted as many students as possible into his circle. In a relatively short time, he succeeded in recruiting a loyal following, especially among university students, that gave him the confidence to claim to be the leading authority among Salafis, usurping the leadership of Abu Nida. Inevitably, tension flared between them. Abu Nida distanced himself from Ja'far Umar Thalib, withdrew from all activities related to Degolan, the centre of the

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[65] Interview with Abu Isa, one of Ja'far Umar Thalib's followers of who had the opportunity to study in Yemen, Yogyakarta, 21 December 2002.

As-Sunnah foundation and subsequently established his own, the Majlis al-Turats al-Islami.

As rivalries intensified, Ja'far Umar Thalib accused his competitors of being Sururis, i.e., adherents to views put forward by Muḥammad ibn Surūr al-Nayef Zayn al-'Ābidīn, originally an Egyptian Ikhwān active in the Salafi *da'wa* movement in Saudi Arabia. Because of his fierce criticism of Saudi Arabia's decision to invite foreign, non-Muslim troops on Saudi Arabian soil during the Gulf War in 1990, he was condemned by prominent Salafi authorities linked to Bin Bāz as a proponent of the *takfīr* doctrine developed by Quṭb, and expelled from the country. Referring to this case, Ja'far Umar Thalib warned Indonesian Salafis to be aware of the danger of the so-called *Surūriyya fitna* (libel) and remain consistent with the Salafi *da'wa*. He believed that such consistency was needed to deal with the enemies of the Salafi *da'wa*, his own rivals, whom he accused of pretending to be Salafis when they were in reality believers in *takfīr*. This doctrine considers that a regime is necessarily apostate if it does not follow *sharī'a* and that violence is allowed to topple such a regime and replace it with a true Islamic state. For Ja'far Umar Thalib, the spread of this doctrine is extremely dangerous, since it can inflame the revolutionary spirit among Muslims, as in the case of the Egyptian Tanẓīm al-Jihād responsible for the assassination of Anwar Saddat in 1981. Ja'far Umar Thalib sought to support this claim by pointing out that the name *As-Sunnah*, the periodical published by Muḥammad ibn Surūr in London, had been adopted by Abu Nida as the name of his own publication. In addition to this, he highlighted the linkage between Jam'iyya Ihyā' al-Turāth of Kuwait, the main donor of Abu Nida, and 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd al-Khāliq, another principal critic of Bin Bāz.[66]

In 1996, Jam'iyya Ihyā' al-Turāth sent 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd al-Khāliq to visit the Pesantren Al-Irsyad, Tengaran. He was charged to resolve the fragmentation. In his speech, he sought to defend Ikhwān al-Muslimīn and its ideologues by exposing the fallibility of their detractors. In reply, Shaleh Suaidi, one of the most important of Abu Nida's cadres, posed a question about the *ḥukm* (rule) dealing with critics condemning so uncompromisingly well-known Salafi authorities and their followers. 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd al-Khāliq regretted the existence of such people and asked them to repent immediately.[67] This event enraged Ja'far Umar Thalib. He felt that Suaidi's question was intentionally directed at him, and was part of a plot to discredit him in front of 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd al-Khāliq. He grew more persistent in attacking Abu Nida and other Salafi proponents and set Yusuf Usman Baisa, who had served as the host for the meeting, clearly in his sights. He could no longer hide his anger and frustration with Yusuf Usman Baisa, whom he remembered as the traitor who had replaced him in his position as the director of the Pesantren al-Irsyad

[66] Interviews with Ja'far Umar Thalib, Yogyakarta, 22 December 2002, and with Muhammad Faiz Asifuddin, Solo, 27 December 2002.

[67] Interview with Yusuf Usman Baisa, Cirebon, 17 February 2003.

Tengaran in 1990. Without any hesitation, he condemned Yusuf Usman Baisa as one of the most dangerous Sururis in Indonesia.

Ja'far Umar Thalib's persistence in launching criticisms and condemnations of Yusuf Usman Baisa drew a nettled reaction from Muḥammad Sharīf Fu'ad Hazā, an Egyptian on the teaching staff at the Pesantren Al-Irsyad Tengaran, sent there by the Jam'iyya Ihyā' al-Turāth of Kuwait. In a pamphlet, he challenged Ja'far Umar Thalib to stage a *mubāhala*, a term derived from its Arabic root *bahla*, which literally means 'cursing each other'. It is a sort of prayer challenge in which the disagreeing parties meet and appeal God to render a verdict by placing his curse on the liars among the participants. To Hazā, this was the only solution open to him to curb Ja'far Umar Thalib's libel, which had caused a severe fragmentation among Indonesian Salafis. A heated debate ensued among Salafis that reached Indonesian students at the Medina Islamic University, particularly Pesantren al-Irsyad Tengaran graduates who maintained contact with their former teachers. Both Ja'far Umar Thalib and Yusuf Usman Baisa felt that the students' position on this issue was highly important. They could be used to mobilize support from some Salafi authorities in Saudi Arabia. Yusuf Usman Baisa sent them a letter explaining Ja'far Umar Thalib's manoeuvres.[68]

In reaction to this letter, the students split into two opposing groups. Some supported Yusuf Usman Baisa, others sided with Ja'far Umar Thalib. Under the leadership of Usamah Faisal Mahri, Abu Munzir Zul Akmal, Ainur Rafiq and Agus Rudianto, the pro-Ja'far group approached mentors at the Medina Islamic University, like Zayd Muḥammad ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī, Rabī' ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī and 'Abd al-Razzāq bin 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-'Abbād, known for their pertinacious opposition to Muḥammad ibn Surūr. The result of their discussions appeared in the form of a small book entitled *Nasehat dan Peringatan Atas Syarif Fuadz Hazaa'* (Advice and Warning about Sharīf Fu'ad Hazā).[69] In his response, Zayd Muḥammad ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī asserted that *mubāhala* was the *da'wa* method used by *Haddadiyin* (followers of Maḥmūd al-Haddad al-Miṣri, an Ikhwan activist advocating the use of the *takfīr* doctrine). Adopting the same tone, Rabī' ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī clarified that such a method was incorrect and warned 'Indonesian Salafis to be aware of the danger posed by people like Muḥammad Sharīf Fu'ad Hazā'. 'Abd al-Razzāq bin 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-'Abbād was of the opinion that recourse to '*mubāhala* is forbidden unless a person has been utterly persistent in his deviations and that it is the last alternative'.[70]

The commotion did not stop there. The *Surūriyya* issue launched by Ja'far Umar Thalib generated tension and conflict between the Salafis and the

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[68] Interview with Azhar Cholid Sef, Jakarta, February 2003.

[69] Usamah Mahri et. al., *Nasehat dan Peringatan [Atas Syarif Fuadz Hazaa']* (Malang: Yayasan Waladun Shaleh, 1996).

[70] Ibid., pp. 1-10.

activists of other Islamist movements, particularly Ikhwān al-Muslimīn, Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr, and the NII movement. Considering themselves as Salafis in terms of doctrine, the proponents of these movements could not accept Ja'far Umar Thalib's condemnation of Sayyid Quṭb and his claim that the movements they followed fell ignominiously into the *ḥizbiyya* (political) realm. To them, there were no grounds for Ja'far Umar Thalib and like-minded people, who considered *da'wa* as the only acceptable form of politics, to blame the *ḥizbiyya* to be the form of *bid'a* and *shirk*, which is in opposition to Islam. Clashes occurred when Ikhwān activists refused to allow Ja'far Umar Thalib's followers to conduct their activities in mosques, such as Mardiyah Mosque, near the Medical Faculty of the Gadjah Mada University. In response, Ja'far Umar Thalib's followers adopted a far more aggressive stance and sought to take over control of the mosque. They even broadened this effort by trying to replace the Ikhwān leadership in the Shalahuddin Community of the Gadjah Mada University.[71]

Since then, a clear-cut distinction has been drawn between the Salafi, Ikhwān al-Muslimīn, Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr and the NII movement. University students engaged in Islamic activism began to recognize the differences between *Halqa Ikhwān al-Muslimīn, Daura Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr, Halqa NII* or *Daura Salafi,* which had previously been confused as simply *halqa tarbiya* or *daura tarbiya*. The followers of each movement began to compete to attract new followers. As a consequence, a change in membership from one movement to another became common. Many members of the NII movement decided to move to the Salafi movement. Their number was much more significant than the defiance of Ikhwān al-Muslimīn, Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr, let alone Tablighi Jama'at. They even established a new umbrella organization called *Rābiṭat Sharī'a*.[72]

What should be emphasized here is that by inflaming the *Surūriyya* issue, Ja'far Umar Thalib sought to reinforce his relationships with prominent Salafi authorities in Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries. This effort was particularly important to bolster his claim that he was the main authority among Indonesian Salafis, who were concerned with Saudi Arabian's campaign to expel the Salafi activists resisting its policy to invite the American troops, while hoping that he would gain considerable support for disseminating Salafi messages from philanthropic foundations operating in the Kingdom. People like Zayd Muḥammad ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī, Rabī' ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī and 'Abd al-Razzāq bin 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-'Abbād were indeed important figures who, because of their influence in the Salafi movement, could facilitate support from foundations for Salafi *da'wa* activities in Indonesia.

Nevertheless, most of Ja'far Umar Thalib's expectations did not materialize. The money from the foundations continued to flow exclusively into

[71] Interview with Abu Mas'ab, 17 December 2002.
[72] Interview with Faqih Edi Susilo, Semarang, 17 February 2003.

the accounts of those who had been accused by Ja'far Umar Thalib of being the Sururi proponents and who had direct access to important figures in the management of the foundations and associated personalities. His manoeuvre to inflame the *Surūriyya* issue backfired by denying him access to the foundations. The executives working in the foundations were apparently discontented with the spread of this issue, whose effect appeared to have caused a serious fragmentation among Indonesian Salafis. As far as they were concerned, this fragmentation could become a barrier to the Salafi movement's attempts to realize its *da'wa* goals. Because of this fragmentation, Ja'far Umar Thalib's relationship with al-Irsyad continued to deteriorate. The leadership of this organization preferred to support Yusuf Usman Baisa, whom they regarded as a moderate figure accepted among foundation executives.

To contain the impact of this fragmentation, the foundations invited a number of leading Salafi scholars from the Middle East to give lectures in Salafi teaching centres in Indonesia. Almost every year since 1997, the Indonesian Salafis have received such scholars from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Jordan, who came to emphasize the importance of Islamic unity and solidarity for the glory of Islamic *da'wa.* Within this context Salīm bin 'Īd al-Hilalī and 'Ali bin Ḥasan 'Abd al-Ḥāmid al-Ḥalabī, two main disciples of Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, recently came to Surabaya to deliver a series of lectures in the al-Irsyad branch office of East Java.[73]

The Periodical Salafy

Ja'far Umar Thalib's determination to be the central figure among the Indonesian Salafis led him to publish his own periodical, the *Salafy*, the first Salafi periodical to emerge after the monthly *As-Sunnah*. Its birth can be seen as a consequence of Abu Nida's refusal to publish Ja'far Umar Thalib's article condemning Muḥammad ibn Surūr al-Nayef Zayn al-'Ābidīn in *As-Sunnah*. The *Salafy* was launched in early 1996 and appeared to be the mouthpiece of Ja'far Umar Thalib. With the slogan 'attempting to follow in the footstep of the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*', it quickly diminished the popularity of *As-Sunnah,* whose management was taken over by Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin under the Solo-based Lajnah al-Istiqamah.

Initially, only about 3,000 copies of each *Salafy* edition were printed, with a limited circulation in no more than ten cities all over Java. Yet only one year later, its circulation had tripled and reached fifty cities throughout

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[73] The arrival of these two emissaries caught particular attention in the Salafi media. See 'Al-Nashāṭat al-Da'wiyya wa'l 'Ilmiyya li Markāz al-Imām al-Albanī li'l Dirāsat al-Manhājiyya wa'l Abhāth al-'Ilmiyya', *al-Aslaha* 37: 6 (2001), p. 79. See also 'Hadirnya Dua Tokoh Murid Syeikh Al-Albani di Surabaya,' *As-Sunnah* 3: 5 (2001), pp. 38-42.

Indonesia.[74] It even expanded its reach into foreign countries, particularly Malaysia and Australia.[75] Its rapid development was partly determined by its presentation and style, making free use of modern design, graphic art and popular media techniques. Ja'far Umar Thalib shrewdly recruited staff experienced in campus media.

Ja'far Umar Thalib has his own column, *Nasehati* (My Advice), in which he airs his opinions about current issues. In the first edition, for instance, he wrote about the Salafi *da'wa* movement as being poised at a crossroads because of the proliferation of groups calling themselves Salafis that, in fact, deviated from the principles of the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*. He underscored that his mission in publishing this periodical was to cleanse the Salafi *da'wa* of deviance:

> 'The Salafi *da'wa* can be envisaged as a movement at a crossroads. What I am trying to say is that the Salafi *da'wa* is in jeopardy. It is poised to deviate from its original goal…Muslims are indeed constantly confronted by highly dangerous crossroads. Consistently walking on the straight path is challenged by a variety of temptations.'[76]

Ja'far Umar Thalib has also contributed articles to other columns, such as *Aḥkām* (Islamic law), *Mabḥath* (analysis), *'Aqīda* (Islamic creed), *Tafsīr* (Quranic exegesis), *Ḥadīth* (Prophetic traditions) and *Sīra* (Islamic history). These columns constitute the main content that appears in every edition and they were the vehicle through which Wahhabite doctrines were introduced. Germane to the Salafi concern with gender issues are pages specifically devoted to women. An emphasis on the responsibility of women is continually hammered home, compounded by a warning of the danger of female deviations from the path of the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ.*

The publication of the *Salafy* contributed a great deal to the proliferation of the *Surūriyya* issue. Through it Ja'far Umar Thalib published a dozen articles attacking Muḥammad ibn Surūr, accusing him of being the mastermind behind the turmoil occurring in various parts of the Muslim world. In Ja'far Umar Thalib's eyes, he was a collaborator of the Western forces trying to undermine Islam, citing his residence in Birmingham, England, which he believed to be the nest of the Western plot to destroy Islam.[77] In the context of his attacks on Muḥammad ibn Surūr, he criticized a number of Islamist leaders both at home and abroad, including Shukri Musṭafā and 'Umar 'Abd al-Raḥmān, the leaders of Jamā'at al-Takfīr wa'l-Hijra and Jamā'at al-Islāmiyya of Egypt,

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[74] Interview with Adi Abdul Mufid, managing editor of the *Salafy*, Yogyakarta, 23 December 2002.

[75] See the list of the *Salafy* sale agents available in different issues of the monthly *Salafy*.

[76] Ja`far Umar Thalib, 'Dakwah Salafiyah di Persimpangan Jalan', *Salafy* 1 (1995), p. 42.

[77] See Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Fitnah Sururiyah Memecah-belah Umat', *Salafy* 2 (1996), pp. 15-18.

respectively; Taqiy al-Dīn al-Nabhani, the founder of the Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr; plus Osama bin Lāden, Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir.[78]

Figure II: *Salafy,* the mouthpiece of Ja'far Umar Thalib in spreading the Salafi message; Figure III: *As-Sunnah*, the first Salafi journal in Indonesia.

Ja'far Umar Thalib also published articles containing sharp criticism of Ikhwān al-Muslimīn and related personalities. As said before, he accused Ikhwān al-Muslimīn of being trapped into *hizbiyya* tendency, aiming at fuelling an Islamic revolution in the Muslim world. The main ideologues of Ikhwān al-Muslimīn, such as Sayyid Quṭb, became the main target of his criticism. Ja'far Umar Thalib is convinced that Quṭb had introduced the *takfīr* doctrine in relation to a ruler, which had inspired various uprisings in the name of Islam. He likewise did not hesitate to condemn Ḥasan al-Banna, Sayyid Hawwā and Muḥammad Quṭb. As far as he is concerned, the principles taught by these ideologues have trapped the Salafi *da'wa* movement into tendencies that smack of *bid'a.*[79]

There is little doubt that through the monthly *Salafy* Ja'far Umar Thalib quickly succeeded in reinforcing his image as a leading Salafi authority in Indonesia. The periodical's distribution expanded very quickly and helped spread of his influence among Salafis and activists of other Islamic movements.

[78] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Memahami Hukum Jama'ah, Imamah dan Baiah', *Salafy* 12 (1996), p. 13.

[79] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

He received more often invitations to give lectures and sermons in cities where many Salafis lived. A sense of group solidarity with Ja'far Umar Thalib as its central figure quickly formed as the foundation for a solid, informal social network. The *Salafy* also created a stronger sense of 'imagined community' bound by a shared religious discourse that transcended boundaries and linked many Salafis through Ja'far Umar Thalib.

In his *Imagined Communities,* Benedict Anderson (1991) notes the transformative value of writing and publishing in fostering a sense of simultaneity and promoting symmetrical patterns of participation and identification and, ultimately, nationhood:

> '…the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation. The potential stretch of these communities was inherently limited, and, at the same time, bore none but the most fortuitous relationship to existing political boundaries….'[80]

Elaborating on this view, Dale Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson (1999) argue that the use of print media in the Islamic world has created a new religious public sphere that increasingly shape contests over the authoritative use of the symbolic language of Islam. Religious messages are no longer exclusively dominated by religious authorities in the form of religious decrees (*fatwās*) or published booklets. New thinkers from diverse backgrounds can also take part, bringing with them their own discourses. The new mode of communication has made these contests increasingly global, so that even local disputes take on a transnational dimension. At the same time, this phenomenon has changed the balance of circulation of new ideas, the sum of Islamic discourse and the transposition of religious issues.[81]

The Ihyaus Sunnah Network

The popularity of the monthly *Salafy* was complemented by the establishment of the *pesantren*-based network. This network was centred in the Ihyaus Sunnah, the *pesantren* established by Ja'far Umar Thalib and some other Salafi proponents in 1994 at Degolan Kaliurang, around 16 kilometres to the north of Yogyakarta, as mentioned in the previous chapter. When I visited this *pesantren* for the first time in 2000, it appeared to be unadorned and poor. It was built on no more than 300 square metres rented for a period of ten years and centred

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[80] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, second edition (London: Verso, 1991), p. 46.

[81] Dale F. Eickelman and John W. Anderson, 'Redefining Muslim Publics', in Dale F. Eickelman and John W. Anderson, *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), p. 14.

around a modest mosque initially named Jamil al-Rahman but later changed to ‘Uthmān Bin ‘Affān. Around 100 metres from this mosque there were two cramped—around 100 square metres—dormitories with walls made of bamboo and dirt floors covered with mats and plastic. The *pesantren* had some 70 students whose ages ranged from seven to seventeen years old. They were taught by four *ustāzs* (religious teachers) renting modest houses in the surrounding area. Some of them were ‘day’ students who had lodgings in nearby villages. The students were divided into three groups according to age. To run this *pesantren* Ja’far Umar Thalib recruited Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, a LIPIA graduate who had completed his study in an Islamic teaching centre in Saudi Arabia associated with Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ al-‘Uthaymīn.

Ihyaus Sunnah emerged as the pioneer of other Salafi *pesantren*s. In the period between 1995 and 2000, a dozen *pesantren*s linked to Ihyaus Sunnah were established, including al-Madinah in Solo, Minhajus Sunnah in Magelang, Lu’lu wal Marjan in Semarang, Diyaus Sunnah in Cirebon, Ihyaus Sunnah in Bandung, As-Sunnah in Makassar, al-Atsariyah in Temengung, Ittibaus Sunnah in Sukoharjo and Magetan, al-Salafy in Jember, Ta’zhimus Sunnah in Ngawi, al-Bayyinah in Gresik, al-Furqan in Cilacap and Pekanbaru, and Ibn Qayyim in Balikpapan. Other *pesantrens* have emerged very recently, including al-Ansar and Difa’u ’Anis Sunnah in Yogyakarta and Ibn Taymiyya in Solo. These *pesantren*s were generally established and run by Ihyaus Sunnah graduates who were sent by Ja’far Umar Thalib to study with Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi‘ī. They include, to mention but a few, Abdurrahman Lombok, Muhammad Sarbini, Abdurrahman Wonosari, Idral Haris, Abu Qatadah, Abu Muhammad Zulkarnain, Lukman Baabduh, Qomar Suaidi, Abdul Jabbar, Abdul Mu’thi al-Medani, Abdus Somad, Abu Hamzah Yusuf Abu Karimah Asykari, Abu Ubaidah Syafruddin, Assasuddin, Azhari Asri, Bukhari, Fauzan, Muslim Abu Ishaq, Usamah Faisal Mahri and Zul Akmal.

Like Ihyaus Sunnah, these *pesantrens* were generally poor, as I observed in 2003. The Minhajus Sunnah located in Magelang, for instance, had 120 students aged seven to seventeen. They occupied an extremely limited space in a modest mosque built on a rice-farming land. All teaching activities took place in the mosque. Around 100 metres from the mosque there were a few teachers’ houses and a small office. A radio station regularly broadcast religious sermons of *pesantren ustazs* for a few hours in the afternoon. The same conditions were apparent in the al-Madinah, located in a village in Boyolali, around 20 kilometres from Solo. Although this *pesantren* had more than 100 students, its facilities were extremely limited. A small, modest mosque served as the centre of its activities as well as the dormitory of a dozen of its students, who were not accommodated in a small, unfinished dormitory located near the mosque. The conditions of the As-Sunnah, which is under the umbrella of the Markaz Nasyad al-Islami Foundation, were much worse. It is located at Baji Rupa, Makassar. A small, modest mosque functioned as the centre of all activities with three small

wooden houses as student dormitories. This *pesantren* had almost 50 students, including those from the surrounding villages. They were taught by four teachers. The only remarkable thing is that this *pesantren* had published a periodical named *An-Nashihah* for three editions under the slogan 'Illuminating the Darkness'.

The system of instruction and curriculum in these *pesantrens* are conventional in nature, indicating repudiation of anything regarded as the corrupting influence of Western culture and, at the same time, the traditional corpus of religious authority. Every morning at around eight o'clock *ustazs* come to mosque and take different positions. The most senior *ustaz* usually takes a position in the centre of the mosque and the other *ustazs* in its wings. Students sit around them and look at the Arabic books in their hands while listening to their *ustazs*. The *ustazs* read the books and explain the meaning of every sentence while giving illustrations and examples. Sometimes they use small blackboards to make their explanations clearer. Some students make notes on their books and others only listen.[82] In the case of teaching Arabic, the students are drilled repeatedly to imitate as fluently as possible the examples of the sentence given by their *ustazs*. Opportunities to raise questions are given to the students after the *ustaz*s finish their lessons. This activity lasts until the noon prayer. Between the noon prayer and the afternoon prayer, students have lunch and rest. After the afternoon prayer, they come back to undertake the same activity. This afternoon activity ends around one hour before the sunset prayer at six o'clock. Between the sunset prayer and the evening prayer at seven the students read and memorize parts of the Qur'an assigned by their *ustazs*.

Islamic Theology (*'Aqīda*), or more precisely Wahhabi doctrine, is the main subject studied in the *pesantren*s. Students read such works as *'Al-Qaul al-Mufīd fī 'Adilat al-Tawḥīd',* which is the summary of the *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* by Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab. In some *pesantrens* students are obliged to memorize it by heart as a condition to continue studying other books. Having completed this book, they are usually obliged to study the *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* or its annotated commentaries, such as *Al Qaul al-Shadīd 'Alā Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* by 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Su'udī. Subsequently, they study *al-Uṣūl al-Thalātha* by Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb before reading *al-'Aqīda al-Wāsiṭiyya* by Taqiy al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya or its annotated commentary, *Sharḥ al-'Aqīda al-Wāsiṭiyya* by Ṣāliḥ ibn Fauzān 'Ali Fauzān. Having mastered these primary books, students are encouraged to read other books, including *Nabdha fī al-'Aqīda* by Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn, *Sharḥ al-'Aqīda al-Ṭahāwiyya al-Muyassar* by Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Khamīs and *Minhāj al-Firqa al-Nājiya* by Muḥammad bin Jamīl Zainū.

Given the fact that all these books are in Arabic, students are first required to study Arabic. Various aspects are taught separately, including *Naḥw*

[82] This method resembles the *bandongan* system popular in the traditional *pesantren.*

(Basic Grammar), *Ṣarf* (Morphology), *Muṭāla'a* (Reading), *Imlā'* (Writing), *Muḥādatha* (Conversation) and *Balagha* (Rhetoric). For this subject, they use popular books in the traditional *pesantrens*, including*, al-Naḥw al-Wāḍiḥ, al-Amthila al-Taṣrīfiyya, Qawā'id al-Ṣarf,* and *al-Balāgha al-Wāḍiḥa*. In addition to these, they make use of *al-'Arabiyya li'l-Nāshi'īn*, a new comprehensive book of Arabic distributed free of charge to various Islamic educational institutions by Saudi Arabian embassies.

The understanding of the Wahhabi doctrine provides the foundation for the students to study other subjects, including Quranic Exegesis, the Prophetic Traditions, Islamic Legal Theory, Islamic Jurisprudence and *Da'wa* Method. For Quranic Exegesis, they read, among other things, *Uṣūl al-Tafsīr* by Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn and *Aysir al-Tafāsir li Kalām al-'Āli al-Kabīr* by Abu Bakr Jābir al-Jazā'irī. For the Prophetic Traditions, they study *al-Arba'īn al-Nawawiyya* by Imām al-Nawāwi or its commentary, *al-Arba'īn al-Nawawiyya* by Ṣāliḥ al-Shaykh, as well as *Muzakkarat al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī* by Rabī' ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī, and *Darurat al-Ihtimām bi Sunan al-Nabawiyya* by 'Abd al-Salām Abi Barjis Ibn Nāṣir 'Abd al-Karīm. For Islamic Legal Theory, the required reading materials include *al-Uṣūl al-Fiqh* and *al-Uṣūl min 'Ilm al-Uṣūl* by Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn and *al-Waraqat fi Uṣūl al-Fiqh* by 'Abd al-Mālik ibn Juwainī. This subject is taught to support another related subject, Islamic Jurisprudence, in which *Taysīr al-Fiqh* by Ṣāliḥ bin Ghanim al-Sadlan, *Minhāj al-Muslīm* by Abu Bakr Jābir al-Jazā'irī, and *al-Mulakhkhas al-Fiqhiy* by Ṣāliḥ bin Fauzān al-Fauzān are the main required reading. For Method of *Da'wa* the students read *Da'wa al-Du'āt* by Ibn Qayyīm al-Jawziyya and *Al-Da'watu ila Allāh* by 'Ali Ḥasan al-Halabī al-Atharī.

Some of the *pesantrens* offer special programmes for university students. Called *Tadrīb al-Du'āt* (Training for preachers) and *Tarbiyat al-Nisā* (Education for Women), these programmes last from three months to one year. The *Tadrīb al-Du'āt* is designed to produce preachers ready to conduct *da'wa* activities. The subjects taught consist of Islamic Theology, Quranic Exegesis, Prophet's Traditions, Islamic History, Islamic Law, Ethics and Arabic. The *Tarbiyat al-Nisā* is addressed to women and aimed at forming their personalities to suit Wahhabite doctrines. In this programme, its participants study Islamic Theology and Islamic Jurisprudence, besides imbibing a number of instructions on behaviour, fashion, gender relations and the methods for taking care of husbands and children. The materials used are selected from the books required in the aforementioned regular programmes.

What seems particularly intriguing is that such poor conditions are not found in several Salafi *pesantrens* associated with the rivals of Ja'far Umar Thalib, including the Pesantren Bin Bāz led by Abu Nida and the Pesantren Imam al-Bukhari led by Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin. Being observed at the end of 2002, the Pesantren Bin Bāz looks prosperous and relatively large with a number of permanent buildings consisting of study rooms, *muṣalla* (small place to pray),

office, dormitories and teachers' houses. As demonstrated by the inscriptions on their walls, these buildings exist thanks to donations given by Middle Eastern personalities, particularly Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti. This *pesantren* is built on one hectare in Piyungan, Bantul, around 25 kilometres to the south of Yogyakarta, which was donated by Sultan Hamengkubowono of the Yogyakarta Court. In this *pesantren* there are nine teachers responsible for around 300 (male and female) students divided into three levels, kindergarten, primary and secondary. The majority of them board in a dormitory in which there is strict separation between males and females. To convey its Salafi messages to a broader audience, this pesantren has published the monthly *Fatawa.*
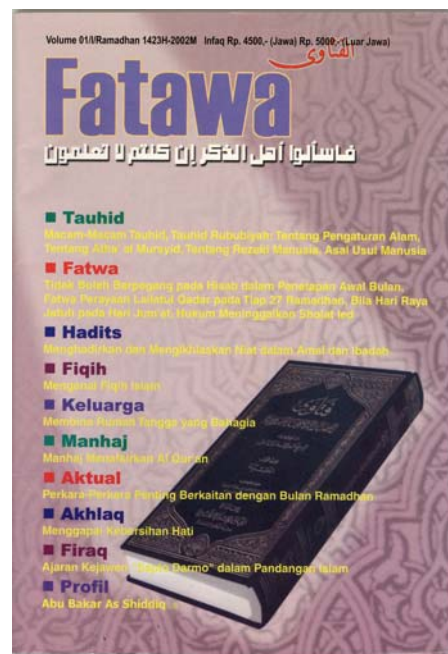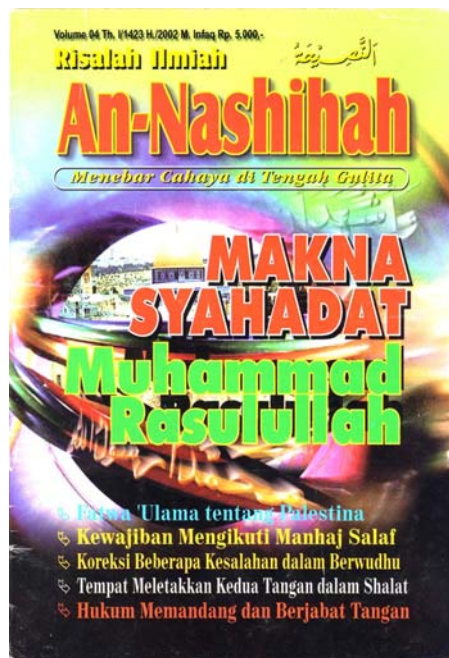
Figure IV: *An-Nashihah,* the journal published by the Salafi pesantren As-Sunnah in Makassar; Figure V: *Fatawa,* the journal published by Abu Nida-run Bin Bāz pesantren in Yogyakarta.

The Pesantren Imam al-Bukhari shares many similarities with the Pesantren Bin Baz. This *pesantren* has developed very fast and appears in better condition and larger than the Bin Baz. It is built on a roughly two hectare area with a dozen permanent buildings consisting of study rooms, office, library, dormitory, teachers' houses and a two-floor mosque. Like in the Bin Bāz every building unit bears inscription on its wall declaring the main donor who financed its construction. These donors are also from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The location of this *pesantren* is in Selokaton, Surakarta, 15 kilometres to the east of

Solo, on the main road from Solo to Purwodadi. There are 400 students who study at three different levels, kindergarten, primary, and secondary. The number of male students is four times larger that that of female students. All of them board in the dormitory that also maintains a partition between males and females. They are taught by 19 teachers, all of whom live in the teachers' houses provided by the *pesantren*.

Nevertheless, the austere conditions in the *pesantrens* associated with Ihyaus Sunnah seemingly strengthened the ties that had been built among their *ustazs* in the form of an informal social network. This relationship is not simply a nexus that links network clusters together but also an engine for network expansion. All the *ustazs* were active in organizing their own activities independently.[83] There was no formal organization available to effect movement mobilization, which defined the hierarchy between the centre and the 'branches', between the leaders and common followers. Only on certain occasions, did they mobilize their students and surrounding people to gather in one city to conduct *tabligh akbar*, a mass religious gathering, in which Ja'far Umar Thalib had the opportunity to stir the emotions of his followers. There is no doubt, however, that in a certain context this passive network can be activated for collective action through the art of mobilization.

[83] Cf. with the development of the Salafi movement in Jordan as discussed by Wiktorowicz (2000), pp. 219-40.

CHAPTER IV

TOWARDS POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND MOBILIZATION

The rise of Laskar Jihad has introduced a rupture in the uniformity of the history of the Salafi movement in Indonesia. The movement which hitherto remained relatively consistent in developing a stance of apolitical quietism began to make its appearance in the arena of *realpolitik* of Indonesia shortly after the collapse of the New Order regime in May 1998. Amidst the fast current of political change that began to gain momentum at that time, the proponents of the movement lost no time in responding to variety of current political issues. They organized gatherings in which they expressed their profound concern about the direction of the on-going reformation process. In a gathering held in Yogyakarta in mid-1998, for instance, they explicitly regretted the current of reformation, which, from their point of view, had resulted in the collapse of the socio-political system of Indonesia and disturbed the shift in the Islamized direction so recently assumed by the state.[1] Through similar gatherings organized afterwards their engagement in the political discourse of the state became increasingly visible.

The enormous momentum of the Salafis' appearance occurred when they surprisingly flooded the Kridosono Sport Stadium in Yogyakarta at the beginning of January 2000. While waving banners and shouting slogans voicing their concern about the communal conflicts in the Moluccas and other trouble spots in Indonesia, they proclaimed a resolution, called '*Resolusi Jihad*' (Jihad Resolution), demanding all elements of Indonesian Muslim society be prepared for a jihad against the enemies of Islam. It was claimed that the necessity to wage this war arose when the so-called 'three pillars of the state', namely Muslims, the military and police, and the president, had been collapsed in the face of ethnic and inter-religious violence provoked by foreign powers. They then announced the establishment of FKAWJ, which was intended to serve as an umbrella organization for Laskar Jihad.

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[1] Concerning this gathering see Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Dakwah Salafiyah Merupakan Perjuangan Reformasi Rakyat', *Salafy* 28 (1998), pp. 10-15.

The dramatic shift of the Salafi movement towards political activism and militancy was inseparable from the political ambitions of the movement's leaders, who saw the rapid changes in the Indonesian political landscape as the means through which to orchestrate popular politics and stage collective actions. Exploiting religious symbols and sentiments, they mobilized a large section of the Salafi membership and other aspirant *mujāhids* to support calls for jihad in the Moluccas and other trouble spots. The task of this chapter is to examine the dynamics around this process of mobilization: What factors stimulated and enabled this process to occur? How did the Salafis mobilize? And to what extent did the movement's network play a role in the process of mobilization? Answering these questions is necessary in order to explore the conditions and processes that eventually led to the formation of Laskar Jihad.

Contentious Politics

Social movement theorists have long been debating the issue of mobilization accompanying the irruption of ordinary people in the streets in attempts to try to exert power against elites, authorities and opponents, or what is commonly referred to as contentious politics. The roots of the debate can be traced to the 1960s, when interests in the study of collective actions and protests increased significantly as a response to the growth of social movements. Unsatisfied by the old-fashioned structural-functionalist model predominantly concerned with the issue of grievances, contemporary scholars like Mancur Olson (1960), Mayer Zald (1966) and Anthony Oberschall (1973) proposed resource mobilization theory. In contrast to the former, which regarded contentious politics as the expression of the mentality of the crowd, of anomie and deprivation, this theory defined collective movements as rational, purposeful and organized actions.[2] According to this perspective, protest actions derive from the way in which social movements are able to organize discontent, reduce the costs of action, utilize and create solidarity networks, share incentives among members and achieve internal consensus.[3]

In one of his important works, Sidney Tarrow (1998) emphasizes the dimension of contentious politics as the strategy developed by the powerless to challenge elites, government authorities or powerful opponents. He argues that a collective action becomes contentious precisely 'when it is used by people who lack regular access to institutions, who act in the name of new or unaccepted claims, and who behave in ways that fundamentally challenge others or

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[2] Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 1-9.

[3] For an overview of resource mobilization approach, see, for instance, Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965) and Mayer N. Zald and John D. McCarthy (eds.), *Social Movements in an Organizational Society* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1987).

authorities'.[4] From his point of view contentious politics can be defined more as a collective challenge based on common purposes and social solidarities, rather than an expression of extremism, violence and deprivation. Within this working definition the importance of the rational and strategic components of social movements, as underscored by resource mobilization theory, is emphasized. Tarrow suggests that contentious politics might develop into a social movement under certain conditions. He mentions three key elements that can facilitate such a transformation, including underlying social network, resonant collective action frames and capacity to maintain sustained challenges against powerful opponents.[5]

By proposing the rational, purposeful model, the social movement theorists sought to fill the lacunae in the structural-functionalist theory, which tends to neglect the issue of movement commonalities rooted in process; how a social movement emerges and what conditions enable discontent to be transformed into mobilization. Herein lies the significance of the theory for our discussion about the dynamics around the rise of Laskar Jihad. The theory is helpful not only to expose the factors that encouraged and facilitated the transformation of the 'apolitical' *da'wa* movement of the Salafis into militant activism of Laskar Jihad, but also to account for the process of the transformation itself. In this respect three key concepts of the social movement theory are of particular importance: 'political opportunity structure', 'cycles of contention', and 'framing'.

The concept of political opportunity structure suggests that the emergence of social movements is frequently triggered by significant changes taking place in a political structure. Tarrow underscores that this sort of change can open up opportunities that create incentives for social actors to initiate new phases of contentious politics and encourage people to engage in it. These opportunities are particularly open when rifts appear within elite circles. This is because divisions among the elite may decrease the risk facing resource-poor people in initiating collective action and, in the meantime, encourage portions of the elite to seize the role of the protector of the people. For some elites, support from outside the polity is needed to maintain the distance in competition with their political rivals. Because the political opportunities are external, the longevity of social movements is largely the result of how long these opportunities are available.[6]

Keeping pace with the opening of political opportunity, social movements go through a kind of lifecycle, from gestation to formation and consolidation.[7] Relevant to this is the concept of 'cycle of contention', which

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[4] Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1-3.

[5] Ibid., pp. 4-6.

[6] Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[7] N. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Action* (New York: Free Press, 1962).

Tarrow defines as a rapid diffusion of collective action from more mobilized to less mobilized sectors, accompanied by a quickened pace of innovation in the forms of contention and techniques of mobilization. During this process, coalitions are formed and reformed, and contingent political events have enduring consequences. It is precisely the moment when movements grow with political encounters in which contending organizations try to win the support of all available networks.[8] This process will determine the success or failure of social movements to make claims by adopting a certain 'repertoire of contention', the forms of collective action that sometimes involve the utilization of irreverent symbols, religious rituals and cultural performances. [9]

An important condition for the success of attempts at mobilization is framing, a process in which actors in a social movement produce, arrange and disseminate discourse that may resonate among those they intend to mobilize.[10] This process can be conducted 'through accentuating devices that either underscore and embellish the seriousness and injustice of a social condition or redefine as unjust and immoral states of affairs'.[11] Bert Klandermans (1989) is of the opinion that interpreting grievances based on a certain master frame and raising expectations of success are the core of the social construction of protest.[12] The role of the master frame in this process is decisive. It is a mode of punctuation, attribution and articulation 'functioning in a manner analogous to linguistic codes in that they provide a grammar that punctuates, and syntactically connects patterns or happenings in the world'.[13]

Framing can be conceptualized as the art of communicating messages in order to persuade audiences and elicit support and participation. Issues and symbols are selected and contextualized to achieve 'frame resonance', i.e., sufficient responses that will transform mobilization potential into actual mobilization. Resonant collective action frames provide the foundation whereby actors in a social movement produce their collective identity, an interactive and shared definition concerning the orientation of their action and the field of opportunities and constraints in which such action is to take place. A strong sense of collective identity is in turn instrumental to the realization of collective

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[8] Tarrow (1998), p. 142-5. See also Sidney Tarrow, *Struggles, Politics, and Reform: Collective Action, Social Movements and Cycles of Protest*, Cornell Western Societies Paper no. 2 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Center for International Studies, 1989).

[9] Ibid., pp. 30-2. See also Della Porta and Diani (1999), pp. 170-2.

[10] David A. Snow, E. Burke Rochford, Steven K. Worden and Robert D. Benford, 'Frame Alignment Process, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation', *American Sociological Review*, 51 (1986), pp. 461-81.

[11] Tarrow (1998), p. 110.

[12] Bert Klandermans, 'Grievance Interpretation and Success Expectations: The Social Construction of Protest', *Social Behaviour* 4 (1989), pp. 121-2.

[13] David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, 'Master Frames and Cycles of Protest', in A. D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (eds.), *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 138.

action success. It determines the decision-making by actors and the way they adapt their activism to changing circumstances.[14]

Because social movements must bring people together in the field, their success is also determined by the existence of a recruitment network. Alberto Melucci (1986) emphasizes that the recruitment network plays a fundamental role in the process of involving individuals since no process of mobilization begins in a vacuum; isolated and uprooted individuals never mobilize. The recruitment network constitutes a crucial intermediate level for understanding the process by which individuals become involved in a collective action. It is within the network that individuals interact, influence each other, negotiate and hence establish conceptual and motivational frameworks for the action.[15] This network can take the form of either a formal, hierarchical organization or an informal social network. If formal organization is generally viewed as an effective instrument for empowering politically excluded collectivities because it coordinates and focuses activities,[16] informal social network can be perceived as a crucial mechanism in providing recruitment pools operating outside the state's control.[17]

Transition to Democracy

As suggested by the concept of opportunity structure, the role of political variables in the rise of a social movement is determinant. This holds true for the case of Laskar Jihad, whose establishment benefited enormously from the political changes taking place following the collapse of the New Order regime and its ensuing transitional processes. This is because the dramatic event stimulated the growth of a free political space, which enabled all members of Indonesian society to discuss and develop opinions on issues that affected their lives. Consequently, a variety of groups, identities and interests emerged, competing for the newly liberated public sphere. As Robert Pinkney (2003) puts it, the collapse of an authoritarian regime is indeed frequently related to a degree of freedom of expression and association together with freedom from arbitrary arrest and imprisonment engendered by the decrease of the state capacity to repress dissent.[18] Paradoxically, this openness presents the remaining power of the status-quo with room to manoeuvre and orchestrate a game that could hold

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[14] Alberto Melucci, *Challenging Codes: Collective Action in the Information Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 70-4.

[15] Alberto Melucci, *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society* (London: Hutchinson, 1989), p. 31.

[16] See Anthony Oberschall, *Social Conflicts and Social Movements* (Englewood: Prentice Hall, 1973).

[17] Quintan Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism, Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood, and State power in Jordan* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001).

[18] Robert Pinkney, *Democracy in the Third World*, Second Edition (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner, 2003), p. 156. See also Graeme Gill, *The Dynamics of Democratization: Elites, Civil Society and the Transition Process* (Hampshire and London: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 7.

the seeds of the destruction of the emerging civil society and this, in turn, would assist it to recover its lost power. The key to reach this end is to manipulate the public sphere, the main arena through which ideas, interests, values and ideologies are formed and the relations of civil society are voiced and made politically efficacious.[19]

It is vital to stress that the fall of an authoritarian leader does not necessarily break down the whole structure of his political power. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) argue that the success of opposition action in forcing an authoritarian regime to rapidly dismantle itself often still leaves power temporarily behind the pillars of the regime.[20] This observation is applicable to the dynamics around the collapse of the Indonesian New Order, whose formation began to take shape in 1966 when Soeharto came to power and started a bloody campaign against communism. Built on the master-narrative of latent communist threat, this regime remained in power for more than thirty-two years under the support of strong political machinery comprised of the military, the Golkar, the state bureaucracy and individuals, groups and organizations associated with them. Because of its pervasive strength rooted in the everyday life of society, this political machinery was not necessarily shaken up by Soeharto's fall. It had instead the potential to become one of the factors that halted the progress of the transitional process towards democratic consolidation. It is not surprising that, as observed by Henk Schulte Nordholt (2003), post-New Order Indonesia finds itself in a situation when 'political and economic changes seem doomed in the face of bureaucratic sabotage, corrupt power politics, short-term opportunism, and the absence of a widely shared vision of the future'.[21]

The complexity of the transitional process following the fall of Soeharto was confirmed by the fact that, in tandem with the spread of democratic discourse, ethnic and religious violence flared up in various regions in Indonesia, threatening a society imbued with a culture of tolerance based on harmonious inter-ethnic and inter-faith relations. For some scholars this fact is inexorably associated with the strategy of manipulating primordial sentiments, which was inherent in the political practice of the New Order. This strategy was deliberately implemented by the regime in order to cause a stunting of the growth of civil society and thereby maintain its hegemony.[22] It should be remembered, however, that although this argument seems plausible, its emphasis

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[19] Simone Chambers, 'A Critical Theory of Civil Society', in Simone Chambers and Will Kymlicka (eds.), *Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 96.

[20] O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), pp. 20-1.

[21] Henk Schulte Nordholt, 'Renegotiating Boundaries: Access, Agency and Identity in Post-Soeharto Indonesia', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 159: 4 (2003), pp. 550-89.

[22] Muhammad AS Hikam, 'Problems of Political Transition in Post-New Order Indonesia', *The Indonesian Quarterly* 27: 1 (1999). See also John T. Sidel, 'Macet Total: Logics of Circulation and Accumulation in the Demise of Indonesia's New Order', *Indonesia* 66 (October 1998), pp. 159-94.

on the position of the state as the only actor that can direct and impose whatever agenda it has on the civil society tends to overlook the dynamics of power relations that also involve the role of society.

As a matter of fact, in its demise the New Order still sought to expand its basis of support in the face of opposition by exploiting a variety of primordial sentiments. Through the intervention of Prabowo Subianto, Soeharto's own son-in-law, who served at that time as the Commander of the Kopassus (Special Armed Force), the regime spread anti-Zionist and Christian sentiments with the support of a number of hard-line Muslim organizations, including KISDI, DDII and the Persatuan Pekerja Muslim Indonesia (Association of Indonesian Muslim Workers, PPMI). In a meeting with proponents of the organizations Prabowo distributed a booklet explaining that the economic crisis afflicting Indonesia and the ensuing problems were the results of a conspiracy plotted by secular nationalists and extremist Jesuits with the collaboration of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), Mossad, the Vatican and Indonesian Chinese. This conspiracy story was concocted by the Prabowo-backed Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) led by Amir Santoso, M. Dien Syamsuddin and M. Fadli Zon.[23]

The New Order's effort to remain in power by mobilizing support from the hard-line Muslim organizations opened up the opportunity for the Salafis to engage in the political discourse of the state and start mobilization. Beginning in February 1998 they organized a *tabligh akbar* in Solo, Central Java, which was attended by hundreds of Salafis from some regions in Indonesia. They listened attentively to the oration of Ja'far Umar Thalib, who called for the coordination of the steps they should take in anticipating the rapid changes that were to occur following the calamity of the Asian economic crisis in mid-1997. In response to this call, they announced the establishment of the *Ikatan Taklim Salafi* (Salafi Religious Teaching Association), of which Ja'far Umar Thalib was appointed leader. Doubtless, the establishment of this association led the Salafis into the first phase of their mobilization. This association emerged as the embryo of FKAWJ, which would give rise to Laskar Jihad.

In the early phases of their involvement in political games, the Salafis experienced some hesitation. They had declared that to enter politics might

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[23] Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 202-3. See also Andrée Feillard, Noorhaidi Hasan and Rémy Madinier, 'L'islam indonésien, au coeur de toutes les interrogations', in Stéphane Dovert and Rémy Madinier, *Les Musulmans d'Asie du Sud-Est Face au Vertige de la Radicalisation* (Paris: Les Indes Savantes & Irasec, 2003), pp. 37-68. Amir Santoso was a University of Indonesia political scientist known for his nearness to Hartono, a retired general who served as an ally of Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, Soeharto's eldest daughter. Like Santoso, M. Dien Syamsuddin also has a background as a political scientist. This American university graduate has been a lecturer at the State Islamic University in Jakarta. But besides teaching, he was active in Golkar and once appointed a director general in the Ministry of Manpower. Fadli Zon is the youngest among the three. He was known as a brilliant student of the Faculty of Literature at the University of Indonesia, who soon after finishing his study dedicated himself to Prabowo.

entail a transgression against the non-political Salafi *da'wa* principle, which should consistently be followed by all Salafis across the world. Within this context, they were not sparing in their criticism of various Islamic movements that could not resist this temptation, by expatiating on the catastrophe that overcame the Salafi movement in Algeria when it had seized political power. They argued that the Salafis should not make the same mistake and for this reason any attempt to mobilize should be rejected.[24] Ja'far Umar Thalib himself insisted that the Salafi movement should be able to maintain its perseverance with its own principle and mission and not succumb to the pleas of certain groups in the society moving towards political activism.[25]

This hesitation could be understood because the memory of hard-line Muslims about the New Order long-term repression on expressions of political Islam was still intact. Only in the last decade of its rule did the New Order gradually change its antagonistic relations with Islam towards accommodation. As discussed in Chapter II, in an attempt to restrain the spread of his legitimacy crisis, Soeharto introduced a strategy of conservative Islamization at the beginning of the 1990s, as marked by the establishment of ICMI under the leadership of Habibie. The introduction of this strategy was enthusiastically welcomed by the constituency of Islamism. They saw it as a promising opportunity and believed they would be able to change the fate of their society, their nation and their state—not to mention bringing about changes at their own private level. In this sense, this strategy appears to have succeeded in 'subduing' a variety of Muslim opposition groups. Suddenly there emerged what Robert Hefner (2000) refers to as 'regimist Islam', which did not recoil from being a real partner of the state.[26]

The Opening of Institutional Access

The opportunity of the Salafis to play an active role in the political arena arose when Habibie came to power. Having been appointed president through a restless drama, Habibie, who had claimed Soeharto to be his primary political mentor, immediately had to confront strong opposition from different elements in the society. In response to these challenges, he tried to convince the opposition about his commitment to reform by, among other measures, restructuring and strengthening the financial system and proposing an extraordinary session of MPR, with the primary aim of setting a new date for the general elections. These general elections would define a new composition of

[24] Team Redaksi, 'Refleksi Perjuangan Dakwah Salafiyah di Aljazair: Antara Konsep dan Realitas', *Salafy* 28 (1998), pp. 16-17.

[25] Thalib (1998), pp. 10-15.

[26] Hefner (2000), pp. 128-43. The use of the term 'regimist Islam' is problematical because their support for Soeharto was generally not based on consent and sincerity, but rather on political interests of their own.

the MPR membership who would elect new president and vice-president.[27] Despite these efforts, he continued to confront a wave of opposition from groups that did not support his ascendancy to power. They persistently protested against him and demanded his resignation. At one point, they threatened that if he were not prepared to step down at the extraordinary session of the MPR in November 1999, 'people power', a united front composed of leftist students and the Barisan Nasional (National Front), would force him out of his office.[28]

In reacting to this pressure, Habibie's supporters came out in force to stand behind him. They were mobilized by the three aforementioned groups and some other hard-line organizations or Muslim parties, such as PPP, the Badan Kerjasama Pondok Pesantren seluruh Indonesia (Islamic Boarding School Cooperative Council of Indonesia, BKPMI), and the Pusat Studi Informasi dan Pembangunan (Centre for Information and Development Studies, CIDES), the think-tank of ICMI. These organizations were backed up by a number of influential hard-line Muslim leaders, such as Hamzah Haz, Anwar Harjono, Hartono Mardjono, M. Kholil Ridwan, Ahmad Soemargono, Eggy Sudjana, Fadli Zon and Adi Sasono. They criticized Habibie's rivals as the parties responsible for the political instability of the state.[29] Fearful of the consequences, they supported the attempts made by Wiranto, the then Minister of Defense and Security as well as the Commander-in-Chief of the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Armed Forces, TNI), to mobilize thousands of masses armed with bamboo spears, known as Pam Swakarsa, from Jakarta, Bogor, Tangerang, Bekasi and Banten. During the extraordinary session in November, this paramilitary force blocked the area around the headquarters of MPR in Senayan to prevent the irruption of anti-Habibie demonstrators.[30]

Habibie's attempt to involve the hard-line Muslim organizations in the face of opposition challenges provided access for the Salafis to institutional actors. The availability of this access added immensely to their confidence to enter the second phase of their mobilization, when they grew more convinced about the possibility of taking action. Indeed, through this access the Salafis had the opportunity to negotiate and establish cooperation with influential allies who could be expected to act as 'friends in court, as guarantors against repression, or

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[27] See Dewi Fortuna Anwar, 'The Habibie Presidency', in Geoff Forrester (ed.), *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos?* (Singapore: ISEAS, 1999), pp. 33-47.

[28] The Barisan Nasional was created in July 1998 by thirty-seven 'secular' leaders, including a number of generals of the 45 generation, generals of the post-45 generation, and leaders of Golkars like MKGR, Kosgoro, Soksi. For a further account on this issue see Adam Schwarz, *A Nation in Waiting: Indonesia's Search for Stability,* Second Edition (Colorado: Westview Press, 2000), pp. 349; see also Kees van Dijk (2001), *A Country in Despair: Indonesian Between 1997 and 2000* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2001), pp. 111-3.

[29] Schwarz (2000), pp. 368-9.

[30] On the issue around Pamswakarsa and similar groups, see Kees van Dijk, 'The Privatization of Public Order; Relying on the Satgas', in Inggrid Wessel and Georgia Wimhofer (eds), *Violence in Indonesia* (Hamburg: Abera, 2001), pp. 152-67.

as acceptable negotiators on their behalf'.[31] Their confidence multiplied when Habibie's allies explicitly called all Indonesian Muslims to stand eagerly behind him. For the allies, to defend Habibie, whom they believed as the symbol of the Islamization of the state, was crucial, because by the time Soeharto left office, their optimism to see the sustainability of the Islamized direction of the state was fading. Their only hope was that Habibie would be able to sustain this strategy.[32] Ironically, however, the embattled Habibie could not do so because of the pressures from various elements in the Indonesian society.

The determination of the Salafis to take action became stronger when the challenge faced by Habibie mounted in relation to the emergence of Megawati Soekarnoputri, the leader of the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle, PDI-P), known for her close relations with secular-nationalist and Christian politicians, as a candidate of president in the run-up towards the general elections in June 1999. Her candidacy immediately brought about a sharp rivalry between the two camps. Supporters of either party attacked the other by exploiting ethnic, religious and other primordial sentiments. In the thick of this rivalry, a merciless debate emerged about whether or not a woman could be president. This debate provoked reactions from Megawati's supporters, who felt the time had indeed come to stand behind her to win the election at all costs. Some pro-Megawati groups in Surabaya, for instance, stated their determination to die for Megawati, a pledge witnessed by a petition signed in blood. In their counter-arguments, Habibie's supporters insisted that to defend their candidate essentially meant to defend Islam and guarantee a course in the direction of the Islamization of the state. Consequently, the campaigns of both sides could easily spill over into conflicts and violence.[33]

Lt. General (ret.) Theo Syafei, a Roman Catholic who served as one of the influential advisors of Megawati, fuelled the anger of the pro-Habibie group, and at the same time provided a ground for anti-Megawati campaigns. He made a speech, a tape of which was circulated, about a plot devised by members of the political elite to transform Indonesia into an Islamic republic by the year 2010. He stated that rather than drawing on the tenets of Islam, Christian notions had inspired and provided a basis for the Indonesian penal code and the ideals of human rights, so that the role of Christians in the historical course of the Indonesian nation-state should not be overlooked. Harsh protests from a variety of Muslim organizations and individuals, particularly from KISDI and ICMI, followed this speech, and many used it as a weapon to attack Megawati.[34]

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[31] Tarrow (1998), p. 79.

[32] See Noorhaidi Hasan, 'Islamic Radicalism and the Crisis of the Nation-State', *ISIM Newsletter*, 7 (March 2001), p. 12.

[33] Van Dijk (2001), p. 212.

[34] Ibid., pp. 380-1.

The Salafis sought to demonstrate their readiness to stand firm behind Habibie by publishing articles in *Salafy*, where they explained their standpoints on recent political developments. They condemned the embracing of Western democracy and pointed to the Zionist-cum-Christian or, alternatively, the communist conspiracy as the parties allegedly responsible for the spread of pernicious democratic or communist ideas in the country. In one of his articles, Ja'far Umar Thalib referred to democracy as an un-Islamic troublemaker visiting disaster upon contemporary Indonesia. He argued that sovereignty does not belong to people, it belongs absolutely to Allah. Allah is the only sovereign Who should be obeyed.[35] Not content with this, the Salafis subsequently organized the so-called *Apel Siaga,* a Call for Readiness, which was also held in Solo in February 1999. In this gathering, they warned Muslims not to fall into the trap set by what they called the enemies of Muslims. Their message was the best way to guard against such an eventuality would be to give unfailing support to an Islamic government led by a pious male Muslim. The gathering also declared that Muslims were required to wage war against a government led by an infidel *(seorang yang kafir)*.[36]

Ja'far Umar Thalib mentioned two particular reasons why the Salafis need to voice their political concern openly. Firstly, he claimed that the Indonesian nation-state had enemies who sought to change the state's direction towards communism, socialism and the like. Secondly, he pointed out that the threat could threaten the existence and security of the Indonesian nation-state. He believed the hour had come to anticipate the agenda of different parties working to topple Habibie by stirring up anxiety about and hostility to the forces that sought to Islamize Indonesia, and thereby secure the fate of the country. He simultaneously condemned a number of pro-democracy leaders, including Amien Rais and Abdurrahman Wahid, the leaders of Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, respectively, as the parties responsible for providing the way for the enemies of Indonesia to realize their ambitions.[37]

It seems that by communicating the information about what they could do and displaying the possibility of coalitions, the Salafis created wider political space and incentives for elites and third parties to manoeuvre. The responses were crucial for their mobilization attempt to reach a new height. In fact, some civilian and military officials contacted Ja'far Umar Thalib at this time and encouraged him to take action against the political left.[38] These meetings apparently encouraged the Salafis to involve themselves more explicitly in

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[35] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Menyoal Demokrasi', *Salafy* 30 (1999), pp. 4-5. See also 'Suara Rakyat Tunduk pada Suara Tuhan', *Suara Hidayatullah* (July 1999), pp. 1-6.

[36] 'Apel Siaga Umat Islam', *Salafy* 30 (1999), p. 44.

[37] Ja'far Umar Thalib, *Penjelasan Sekitar Sikap Politik Salafi*, cassette record of the speech delivered at the *tabligh akbar* in Yogyakarta (Jakarta: Divisi Penerangan DPP FKAWJ, 1999).

[38] Robert W. Hefner, 'Civic Pluralism Denied? The New Media and Jihadi Violence in Indonesia', in Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson (eds.), *New Media in the Muslim World*, second edition (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2003), pp. 158-179.

public politics, as demonstrated by their decision to support the campaign to disqualify Megawati as a presidential candidate. This campaign was marked by the spread of photographs of Megawati praying in a Balinese Hindu temple in Indonesian newspapers, which were immediately seized upon by Megawati's detractors to suggest that she was a Hindu. While displaying a photo of Megawati praying together with Balinese Hindus, A.M. Saefuddin, a PPP minister in Habibie's cabinet, asked: Are we ready to be led by a Hindu president? Infuriated by Saefuddin's tactic, Hindu Balinese held a demonstration to demand Habibie discharge Saefuddin from his cabinet. This issue increased opposition to Megawati's candidature. Rallies were organized by different groups to reject a woman president.[39] Within this context, the Salafis raised some questions to Ibrahīm ibn 'Amīr al-Ruhaylī, a Saudi *Salafī muftī* who was a lecturer at the Islamic University of Medina. In response to their questions this *muftī* issued a *fatwā* (religious decree), declaring that:

> 'To appoint a woman to be the leader of a Muslim state is sinful *(munkar)*. We are not allowed to choose a Muslim woman to be the leader of Muslim men, just as we are not allowed to appoint a sinful man to be the leader. But if the woman has already been elected to be president, but then signs of her sinfulness emerge, we would not be allowed to resist against her. In principle, a woman cannot be appointed to be a leader. To appoint a woman as president is an act which contradicts the guidance of the Prophet'.[40]

Pro-Habibie groups did their very best to cut Megawati's feet out from under her but scarcely mounted a serious challenge. Thus the 35.7 million votes (34%) that went to her PDI-P party won the election. This result indubitably fostered discontent among Habibie's supporters, who then took to the streets to reject Megawati. Megawati supporters stood firm, supporting their leader. Towards the general session of MPR in October 1999, they demonstrated on Jakarta's streets to voice their support. These demonstrations were countered by Habibie's supporters, including those joined in the Front Jihad Bersatu (United Jihad Front) and Laskar Fi Sabilillah (Holy Force for the Cause of God), who sent a message to take all the steps necessary to impede Megawati's path to power.[41]

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[39] On the demonstrations rejecting a woman president, see Peter G. Riddell, 'The Diverse Voices of Political Islam in Post-Suharto Indonesia', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 13: 1 (2002), pp. 65-84.

[40] 'Sikap Umat Islam Bila Megawati Jadi Presiden', *Salafy* 33 (1999), pp. 53-54.

[41] Andree Feillard, 'Indonesian Traditionalist Islam's Troubled Experience with Democracy (1999-2001)', *Archipel* 64 (2002), p. 120.

Moluccan Conflict

The intensification of the Salafis' mobilization towards political activism and militancy went hand-in-hand with the escalation of the communal conflict in the Moluccas, which erupted on 19 January 1999. A fight between two youths in the Batumerah Terminal in the heart of the town of Ambon, the provincial capital of the Moluccas, immediately escalated into clash between two groups of youths identified as the Mardika and Batumerah gangs, respectively. Although fighting between them was by no means unusual, this time it led to the destruction of houses, shops and public facilities in the area around the terminal, and more importantly quickly sparked a hostile atmosphere throughout Ambon.[42] Crowds formed in the streets around Al-Fatah Mosque and in the Mardika Square, near the Maranatha Church. With passions running high, clashes between the two masses were inevitable, particularly on the second day when ferocious crowds began to attack and kill each other. These clashes eventually evolved into communal violence between Muslims and Christians.[43]

The ferocity of both parties continued without any significant attempt by the security apparatus to bring it to an end.[44] Those ostensibly there to maintain law and order seem to have taken no action to stop people from indiscriminately burning, plundering and killing. In 'securing' the situation, they often took up positions behind either mass.[45] Only on the fourth day of the conflict the commander of the Regional Military Command (Kodam) of Trikora, which was responsible for the province of the Moluccas, issued an order to fire, but by that time the rapidly escalating conflict could no longer be curbed. The first three days had already cost the lives of twenty-two people and destroyed hundreds of houses, worship sites and traditional markets. Ambon soon became a city of death; blood and corpses were scattered everywhere. Access to the city was no longer possible, as roads were blocked by piles of rocks, oil drums and trees. Virtually all social, political and economic activities were paralysed, as if life itself had ground to a halt.[46]

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[42] Interviews with Muhammad Farhan, Mukhtar and Sahjuan Pahasuan, Ambon, 23 April 2003.

[43] For a further account on the chronology of the eruption of the conflict, see Lambang Trijono, *Keluar Dari Kemelut Maluku: Refleksi Pengalaman Praktis Bekerja Untuk Perdamaian Maluku* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2001); and Gerry van Klinken, 'The Maluku Wars: Bringing Society Back In', *Indonesia* 71 (April 2001).

[44] Interview with Ali Fauzy, the former head of the Dewan Dakwah branch office of the Moluccas and the Chairman of the Badan Imarat Muslim Maluku, Ambon, 22 April 2003.

[45] Interview with L.W.J. Hendriks, the Synod Chairman of the Moluccan Protestant Church, Ambon, 24 April 2003.

[46] Tim Peneliti LIPI, 'Runtuhnya Pela Gandong: Identifikasi Akar Masalah Kerusuhan Ambon dan Maluku Utara serta Solusinya', in *Bara dalam Sekam: Identifikasi Akar Masalah dan Solusi Konflik-konflik Lokal di Aceh, Maluku, Papua, & Riau*, edited by Tim Peneliti LIPI (Bandung: Mizan, 2001), p. 77.

Violence quickly spread to the nearby islands of Seram, Haruku, Saparua and Manipa. Villages, including Rumberu, Rambatu, Witasi, Kairatu, Kulur, Sirisori Islam, Iha, Pia, Haria, Sirisori Kristen, Ouw, Ulat, Kariu, Pelau, Kailolo, Rohomony and Oma witnessed the ferocity of their respective citizens in taking people's lives and burning buildings. This rapid spread of the conflict was accelerated and exacerbated by the influx of those trying to flee. They brought with them rumours of the threats of other parties. At a later stage, the conflict reached the Southeast, Central and North Moluccas. As in Ambon, Muslims and Christians in these places attacked and killed each other, creating yet another wave of bloody communal violence.[47] The conflict that had initially been confined to Ambon engulfed the whole Moluccan Archipelago.

It is important to stress here that before the conflict flared up, Muslims and Christians in the Moluccas had lived in relative harmony. They interacted in the tolerant, friendly *pela-gandong* tradition, a traditional Moluccan social system that facilitates ties between one or more clans, tribes or religions.[48] They did, however, live in different villages according to traditional segregation, *negeri-negeri.* Consequently, villages were identified either as *Negeri Salam* (Islamic village) or *Negeri Sarani* (Christian village).[49] Tension between Muslims and Christians in the islands only became apparent after the influx of Muslim migrants from Sulawesi seeking a more prosperous life during the 1980s. The policy of the then Governor of the Moluccas, Hasan Slamet, who sought to encourage the development of Ambon and other areas in the province, keeping faith with the transmigration programme launched by the central government, accelerated the dissemination of Muslim migrant communities. The migrants soon made their mark as successful small-scale traders, undermining the former superiority of local businessmen. They took over the majority of stalls in the main traditional markets of Batumerah, Mardika and Pelita.[50]

In the wake of the influx of the Muslim migrants, Islam emerged as one of the salient social indicators in Ambon. This occurred coincidentally alongside the shift in state policy towards political Islam on the national level. The Muslim population increased steadily and, in keeping with increasing Islamic activism, Ambon witnessed shifts in its political make-up. Muslims found important positions in the bureaucracy and gradually took the place of retiring Christian officials. The composition of civil servants in Ambon in 1999 demonstrated that Muslims dominated the bureaucratic sector, comprising 74 per cent of the first

[47] Trijono (2001), pp. 45-6. See also International Crisis Group (2000), p. 5.

[48] Dieter Bartels, *Guarding the Invisible Mountain: Intervillage Alliances, Religious Syncretism and Ethnic Identity Among Ambonese Christians and Moslems in the Moluccas*, PhD Dissertation (Ithaca, Cornell: Cornell University, 1978), p. 56.

[49] Tamrin Amal Tomagola, 'The Moluccan Communal Conflict', paper presented to Workshop on Conflict Resolution Strategy (Bogor: Pusat Bahasa dan Budaya UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 22-23 October 2002), p. 2.

[50] Interview with M. Nur Tawainela, a Moluccan historian, Ambon, 25 April 2003.

echelon, 69 per cent of the second and 53 per cent of the third.[51] The shifts in local politics were aggravated by growing competition on the job market among urban youths and the inescapable web of family, village, and religious patrons that provided access to it. Looking at all these dimensions, it is perfectly reasonable that Gerry van Klinken (2001) should interpret the Moluccan conflict as 'the result of an interaction between long-term "primordialist" social patterns and a short-term instrumentalization of those patterns in the context of intra-elite competition at the local level'.[52]

Nevertheless, the real tension was only sensed when hundreds of indigenous Ambonese thugs (*premans*), who had been involved in some of Soeharto's crony-sponsored violence businesses in Jakarta, were forced to flee to Ambon. They were Christian *premans* led by Milton Matuanakotta, who reportedly had access to Bambang Trihatmojo, Soeharto's second son, via Yoris Raweyai, the deputy-head of the Pancasila Youth (Pemuda Pancasila). Their return to Ambon was a direct result of the Ketapang riots in November 1998, which juxtaposed them with Ongen Sangaji-led *preman* group. This group served in the patron-client relationship of Siti Hardiyanti Rukmana, Soeharto's eldest daughter, via Abdul Gafur, former Minister for Youth and Sport Affairs, in the 1980s. The arrival of these *preman*s, who brought with them the smouldering embers of their own private vengeance, was believed to have contributed directly to the eruption of the Moluccan conflict, as they were directly involved in spreading false rumours and inciting violence using walky-talkies and mobile phones.[53]

Apparently, the arrival of the Jakarta *premans* was linked to several events that had occurred in Ambon before 19 January 1999, which have been unfortunately overlooked by most researchers. From 16 to 18 November 1998, thousands of students from the State University Pattimura (Unpatti) and the Christian University of Moluccas (UKIM) held a series of demonstrations in front of the District Military Command (Korem) of Pattimura, decrying the dual-function of the military. These rallies culminated in the military's repressive reaction that claimed three lives and injured seventy people. On 20 November, Governor M. Saleh Latuconsina sponsored a meeting between the commander of the Korem and religious leaders from the Christian and Muslim communities. In that meeting, the commander was blamed for acting brutally toward students.[54]

Bearing in mind these events, it was apparently no accident that on 13 December a soldier from the Battalion Infantry 733 Ambon sparked a small riot

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[51] Trijono (2001), p. 22.

[52] Van Klinken (2001), p. 2.

[53] George Junus Aditjondro, 'Guns, Pamphlets and Handie-Talkies: How the Military Exploited Local Ethno-Religious Tensions in Maluku to Preserve their Political and Economic Privileges', in Ingrid Wessel, and Georgia Wimhofer (eds.), *Violence in Indonesia* (Hamburg: Abera, 2001), p. 112.

[54] Interview with Ali Fauzy, Ambon, 22 April 2003.

at a wedding party in Wailete, a village populated mostly by Buginese, Butonese and Makassarese (BBM). As a result, hundreds of people from a Christian village, Hative Besar, attacked Wailete, burned it and expelled its Muslim population. In a similar case on 27 December, hundreds of people from Bak Air, a Christian village, attacked Tawiri, a Muslim village, because a pig owned by a Bak Air family was found dead there. Ever since then, rumours had been rife about the possibility of riots in the Moluccas.[55]

The escalation of the Moluccan conflict reached its peak after Abdurrahman Wahid came to power to replace Habibie in October 1999. His success in defeating Megawati was particularly owed to the political *manoeuvres* of the Middle Axis, *Poros Tengah*, a political alliance of Muslim parties led by Amien Rais, the chairman of the Partai Amanat Nasional (National Mandate Party). Wahid's accession was initially welcomed with euphoria. He was considered a leader who would be able to allay the tensions between the supporters of Habibie and Megawati, and to lead Indonesia towards democracy. Paradoxically, even though there was a need to sustain the process of political reform and maintain his broadly supported legitimacy, Wahid started his mandate by declaring a willingness to establish commercial links with Israel. Exacerbating matters, he proposed to lift the thirty-four-year ban on the Indonesian Communist Party. These controversial issues provoked criticism from various quarters, particularly from hard-line Muslims who had long nurtured their hatred of Israel and the Indonesian Communist Party. As a result, Wahid's claim to political legitimacy quickly plummeted.[56]

Dissatisfaction with Wahid was also rife among the military. As the main pillar of the New Order, its power was legitimized by the *dwifungsi* (dual-function) doctrine and it enjoyed certain privileges that guaranteed its access to political, social and economic institutions. The cherished dual-function doctrine was embodied in the appointments of military officers in the bureaucracy, serving as ambassadors, provincial governors, district chiefs and in parliament.[57] The fall of Soeharto naturally brought negative consequences for the military. Its members had to confront demonstrations discrediting their image and calling for their return to barracks. There were even demands to bring military leaders to international justice for their responsibility for violence during the New Order.[58]

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[55] Interview with M. Isa Raharusun, the leader of the Muhammadiyah Youth Association, Ambon, 22 April 2003.

[56] Marcus Mietzner, 'Personal Triumph and Political Turmoil: Abdurrahman Wahid and Indonesia's Struggle for Reform', in Damien Kingsbury (ed.), *The Presidency of Abdurrahman Wahid: an Assessment after the First Year*, Annual Indonesia Lecture Series No. 23, (Monash: Monash Asia Institute, 2000), p. 16.

[57] For further account on the role of the Indonesian Armed Forces in Indonesian politics, see Harold Crouch, *The Indonesian Army in Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978).

[58] Patrick Walters, 'The Indonesian Armed Forces in the Post-Soeharto Era', in Geoff Forrester (ed.), *Post-Soeharto Indonesia: Renewal or Chaos* (Leiden and Singapore: KITLV and ISEAS, 1999), pp. 59-64.

These demands put the military on the defensive, which may explain why it seemed loath to take action when the Moluccan conflict erupted.

Wahid launched his ambitious plans to reduce the supremacy of an already demoralized and thinly stretched military. Having appointed a civilian, University of Indonesia lecturer Juwono Sudarsono, as the Minister of Defence, he sought to separate the police force from the military by bringing it under the president's personal control. No less important, he dissolved the Coordination Board for the Assistance of the Maintenance of National Stability (Bakorstanas) and the Board for Special Investigation (Litsus), two institutions that had enabled the military to interfere in various political and social affairs. The disenchantment of the military culminated when Wahid rejected Wiranto's plans to reorganize the army's territorial units and even forced Wiranto to resign his position as the Coordinating Minister of Political and Security Affairs on the grounds of human rights violations in East Timor. Tension between Wahid and the military, in which Wiranto wielded a great deal of influence, continued to escalate when he sought to place a number of pro-reform generals in strategic command positions.[59]

The escalation of the Moluccan conflict during Wahid's presidency opened the way for a violent phase of Salafi mobilization. They began to speak about the need to fight jihad*,* which they believed was the only solution to the conflict. This brought about a confrontation with Wahid. He tried to order the security and military apparatus to repress any jihad mobilization and threatened to mobilize Banser (Multi-purpose Unit), the paramilitary wing of the Nahdlatul Ulama youth organization, Anshor, used as the NU's own security forces. But the Salafis did not back down. They continued calling for jihad and mobilizing fighters. Both sides had apparently decided to do their utmost to win the struggle. For them it was a matter of life and death.

In their battle against Wahid, the Salafis enjoyed the support not only of hard-line Muslim organizations but also of military elites who saw the chance to utilize militant Muslim groups to retaliate against Wahid for sacking them from key military positions. At that time, high-ranking military officers were rumoured to have persuaded and promised military and financial assistance to Salafi leaders.[60] The backup from the military elites was doubtless extremely important for the progress of the Salafi mobilization for violent jihad actions. It provided not only an inducement for them to take action immediately but also a guarantee that they would not face repression from the security apparatus and the military, thereby reducing negative consequences of their action.

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[59] Dewi Fortuna Anwar et al., *Gus Dur versus Militer: Studi tentang Hubungan Sipil-Militer di Era Transisi* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 2002), pp. 67-8. For further readings, see Sukardi Rinakit, *The Indonesian Military after the New Order* (Singapore: ISEAS, 2004).

[60] Marcus Mietzner, 'Politics of Engagement: The Indonesian Armed Forces, Islamic Extremism, and the "War on Terror"', *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 9: 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 71-84.

The Birth of FKAWJ

Having secured the support of military elites and hard-line Muslim leaders, the Salafis began mobilizing fighters, emphasizing the need to wage jihad in order to assist Muslims in the Moluccas to repel the attacks of their Christian enemies. Formulated in a master frame, they stated their grievance in the general terms of the conflict having killed thousands of Muslims and expelled hundreds of thousands more from the islands. From their perspective, the conflict could escalate because the government stood by idly, indifferent to the fate of Moluccan Muslims who were facing genocidal attacks from the enemies of Islam. They argued that this injustice was rooted in the government's policy of siding with Christians and leaving intervention to the Zionist-Christian international powers through RMS (*Republik Maluku Selatan*/Republic of the South Moluccas), which was sarcastically called *Republik Maluku Serani*, Republic of the Christian Moluccas.[61]

In their attempt to strive for 'frame hegemony', the Salafis shrewdly utilized and took over the discourses prevailing in the Islamist print media, notably *Sabili* and *Media Dakwah*, which were derived from a variety of perceptions and interpretations put forward by hard-line Muslim leaders and politicians. The first is a discourse of separatism blaming RMS, a rebellious movement that erupted under the leadership of Ch. Soumokil in Ambon in the 1950s, as the driving force behind the conflict. According to this discourse, the remaining forces of RMS, supported by their Netherlands-based international sponsor, deliberately instigated the conflict in an effort to set up a Moluccan state that would be based on Christian principles. The ultimate goal is to disintegrate Indonesia and transform it into a Christian state. Warning messages were spread that Christians are constantly keen to enforce their politico-economic hegemony on the Republic of Indonesia at the expense of the marginalization of Muslims, as occurred during the first two decades of the New Order.[62]

The framing of RMS first appeared at the national level on 28 January 1999 at a press conference organized by two hard-line Muslim groups, KISDI and PPMI, led by Ahmad Sumargono and Eggy Sudjana, respectively, both of whom are notorious for their expertise in mobilizing Muslim masses for rallies and demonstrations. Lt. General A.M. Hendropriyono, the Minister of Transmigration during Habibie's presidency, made it clear in a public meeting in Ambon on 9 March 1999 that RMS was to blame for the Mollucan conflict.

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[61] Forum Komunikasi Ahlu Sunnah Wal' Jama'ah, *Seruan Jihad ke Maluku* (Yogyakarta: Kadiv Penerangan FKAWJ, 2000).

[62] See Husein Umar, 'Intoleransi Kaum Nasrani Terhadap Umat Islam', in Adian Husaini, *Gereja-Gereja Dibakar, Membedak Akar Konflik SARA di Indonesia* (Jakarta: Dea Press, 2000), p. 1-24.

General Faisal Tanjung, the Coordinating Minister of Political and Security Affairs in the Habibie cabinet, clarified Hendropriyono's statement by pointing out evidence of RMS involvement.[63] Interpretations were offered that the engagement of RMS was inseparable from Christians' attempts to rebel against the Republic of Indonesia by inflaming communal—ethnic, religious and racial (SARA)—conflicts in various parts of the country, such as Ketapang in West Kalimantan, and Kupang in Eastern Nusa Tenggara. It is argued that these attempts gained a new impetus when East Timor proclaimed its independence following the referendum on 30 August 1999.[64]

The second frame was a discourse about Muslim cleansing, which portrayed the Moluccan conflict as part of the agenda run by Christians to expel all Muslims from the Moluccas. The dissemination of the discourse was spearheaded by *Sabili,* which from the first months of the conflict ran provocative headlines emphasizing the ferocity of Christians in taking lives of Muslims and destroying mosques and houses that belonged to Muslim communities. To Indonesia's most popular Islamist magazine, the ferocity of Christians in the islands could only be compared to that of Serbians when they killed and raped thousands of innocent Bosnians.[65] In the same tone, *Media Dakwah* portrayed the Moluccan issue, reporting the testimony of Abdul Aziz, the *imām* of Al-Fatah Mosque in Ambon. This magazine narrated how Christians had wildly attacked Muslims praying in a local mosque, raped a dozen women in front of their husbands and killed hundreds of injured Muslims and pregnant women in a hospital.[66] More cogently, the dissemination of this discourse involved the circulation of photos, video compact disks (VCDs) and amateur films of atrocities committed by Christians. These items were sold in markets and on the streets in various cities in Indonesia, spreading 'the insistent, repetitive narrative of victimization resurrected on and out of body parts'.[67]

Keeping pace with the circulation of stories about acts of cruelty committed by Christians, the issue about the expulsion of Muslim migrants from the Moluccas attracted special attention among hard-line Muslim organizations. News circulated that by March 1999 70,000 people, most of whom were Butonese, Buginese and Makassarese from Sulawesi, had fled their homes. Desperate to leave, they boarded outgoing ships, some even scrambling up the mooring cables.[68] It is said that they were the main targets of native Christians,

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[63] Aditjondro (2001), p. 115.

[64] 'Kudengar Nama Allah Memanggil', *Sabili*, 15: 6 (10 February 1999), pp. 26-29 and 'Ancaman Disintegrasi Dari Ambon', *Sabili*, 15: 6 (10 February 1999), pp. 33-36.

[65] 'Tentara Allah Turun di Ambon', *Sabili*, 17: 6 (10 March 1999), pp. 54-61 and 'Moslem Cleansing, Ambon Tidak Sendirian', *Sabili*, 18: 6 (24 March 1999), pp. 25-28.

[66] 'Mereka Membunuh Secara Keji dan Biadab', *Media Dakwah*, 297 (March 1999), pp. 24-27.

[67] Patricia Spyer, 'Fire Without Smoke and Other Phantoms of Ambon's Violence', *Indonesia* 74 (October 2002), p. 33.

[68] See Van Dijk (2001), p. 387.

extolling the slogan 'BBM', an acronym that serves as the cynical expression in the Moluccas for Butonese, Buginese and Makassarese migrants. For Moluccan Muslims, this acronym had been transformed by Moluccan Christians to stand for 'Burn and kill the Muslims' (*Bakar, Bunuh Muslim*). The explosion of this issue triggered mass demonstrations and rallies. In mid-March 1999 thousands of Muslims led by Ahmad Sumargono, Abdul Rasyid Abdullah Syafi'i and Abu Bakar al-Habsyi joined a 15-kilometre march from Al-Barkah Mosque in Tebet to al-Azhar Mosque in Kebayoran Baru in Jakarta. They questioned the 'indifference' of Indonesians to the fate of Moluccan Muslims while stating the necessity to wage jihad against Christians.[69] Some Muslim organizations, such as Front Hizbullah Bulan Bintang, KAMMI, HAMMAS, HMI-MPO, PII and FPI opened recruiting booths to send volunteers to the Moluccan islands.[70]

What makes the framing of Muslim cleansing for frame hegemony even more pressing is that it was constructed partly to resist the Christian counter-frame. Churches spread speculations that the conflict cannot be disassociated with the attempt by Muslim forces to Islamize the islands by expelling Christians. In his testimony to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), John A. Titaley, a Protestant minister, explicitly argued that the Moluccan conflict was basically the result of a campaign to drive Christianity completely out of eastern Indonesia.[71] To support their claim many parties associated with churches circulated photos, VCDs and amateur films recording the alleged atrocities of Muslims. The Masariku Network, for instance, provided Christians with eyewitness reports by refugees, people attacked or forcibly converted or by traumatized children and women. The Crisis Center for the Diocese of Ambon, likewise, delivered photos of victims and property damage.[72]

The third discourse in the process of framing was the accusation that behind Moluccan Christians were Zionists who saw the chance to realize their ambition to destabilize Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world. Stories were circulated about the collaboration between Zionists and RMS in attacking Muslims, complete with the presence of David Stars side-by-side with RMS flags in Christian villages.[73] Evidence was given that in its website RMS had published the article by David Harowitz, an American Jew, stating the readiness of Israelis to support the struggle of Christians in the Moluccas.[74] The issue around Zionist conspiracy abounded especially after Abdurrahman Wahid

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[69] 'Kami Siap Berjihad', *Media Dakwah*, 298 (April 1999), pp. 14-15. See also Hartono Ahmad Jaiz, *Ambon Bersimbah Darah, Ekspresi Ketakutan Nasrani* (Jakarta: Dea Press, 1999).

[70] See Jaiz (1999), pp. 186-8.

[71] Johan H. Meuleman, 'From New Order to National Disintegration: the Religious Factor between Reality, Manipulation, and Rationalization', *Archipel* 64 (2002), pp. 81-99.

[72] Birgit Brauchler, 'Cyberidentities at War: Religion, Identity, and the Internet in the Moluccan Conflict', *Indonesia* 75 (April, 2003), pp. 123-51.

[73] 'Ambon; Skenario Yang Belum Selesai', *Abadi* 19 (24 March 1999), p. 14.

[74] 'Skenario Besar Tragedi Ambon', *Sabili* 18: 6 (24 March 1999), pp. 20-24.

had come to power and proposed the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel.[75] Accusations emerged that by collaborating Zionists, Wahid would inevitably cause the conflict to degenerate and deteriorate the conditions of Muslims in the islands.[76]

Frames proposed by the hard-line Muslim leaders and politicians found their more solid foundation and legitimacy when the so-called Tobelo massacre occurred on 26 December 1999 in Halmahera island's Tobelo District. This tragedy killed at least 500 Muslims and expelled more than 10,000 survivors.[77] In reaction, thousands of sympathizers of DDII, KISDI, GPI, KAMMI and HAMMAS poured onto the streets in Jakarta to demand the government work more seriously to curb the violence. Nor did they stop there, but went further by organizing campaigns and demonstrations calling for jihad. These campaigns culminated in religious gathering said to be of a million Muslims, *tabligh akbar sejuta umat*, in January 2000 around the National Monument in Jakarta. The *tabligh akbar* was organized by a young NII activist, Al Chaidar, and a number of prominent Muslim politicians, including Amien Rais, Hamzah Haz, Ahmad Sumargono, Eggy Sujana, Husein Umar and Daud Rasyid, gave speeches criticizing Wahid for his perceived indifference to the Moluccan conflict. They even presented Wahid with a deadline of two weeks to solve the crisis.[78]

The presence of the aforementioned influential personalities at this event indicates that the issue of the Moluccan conflict had emerged as unifying purpose among diverse camps of hard-line Muslims and political actors. Concern with this issue apparently generated what Asef Bayat (2005) refers to—alluding to Anderson's famous phrase—as 'imagined solidarity', which is 'forged spontaneously among differential actors who come to a consensus by imagining, subjectively constructing, common interests and shared values between themselves'.[79] Different interests and purposes carried by the heterogeneous groups and actors converged in the name of the solidarity for the Moluccan Muslims, considered victims of Islam's enemies.

Only one week after this event, the Salafis issued their jihad resolution and proclaimed the establishment of FKAWJ on the occasion of their *tabligh akbar* in the Kridosono Sport Stadium in Yogyakarta at the beginning of January 2000, as mentioned earlier. Under the aegis of this organization, they seemed no longer hesitant about taking to the streets to voice their protests against various

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[75] On reactions of hard-line Muslims against this proposal, see Adian Husaini, *Zionis Israel Prek, Pergolakan Umat Islam Indonesia Melawan Zionis* (Jakarta: Dea Press, 1999).

[76] See 'Gus Dur-Zionis Main Mata', *Sabili*, 11: VII (17 November 1999), pp. 16-9; and 'Mungkinkah Ambon Kembali Damai', *Sabili*, 11: VII (17 November 1999), p. 54.

[77] International Crisis Group, *Indonesia: Overcoming Murder and Chaos in Maluku* (Jakarta/Brussels: ICG Asia Report 10, 2000), p. 8.

[78] Irfan S. Awwas, *Aksi Sejuta Ummat dan Issu Negara Islam: Dialog Internet* (Yogyakarta: Wihdah Press, 2000).

[79] Asef Bayat, 'Islamism and Social Movement Theory', *Third World Quarterly* 26: 5 (July 2005).

policies adopted by Wahid. They were particularly hostile to Wahid's proposals to lift the thirty-four-year ban on the Indonesian Communist Party and establish commercial links with Israel. They reiterated their determination and readiness to fight a physical jihad in order to assist Muslims in the islands and defend them from what they referred to as genocidal attacks by Christians. In this way the Salafis began to mobilize a consensus, which was necessary in an effort to navigate 'an emotional valance aimed at converting passivity into action'.[80]

The Salafis vigorously mobilized resources through communication channels, the division of labour, and the financing of their activism. This mobilization effort was facilitated by the existence of the Salafi *da'wa* network, which consisted of *halqa* and *daura* centres scattered on university campuses, *pesantrens* and mosques, as well as Salafi communities living in particular areas of concentration. These centres served as the recruitment pools through which voluntary fighters were recruited. The cohesiveness of this network, which, as I shall demonstrate later in chapter VI, resembles a religious sect, reduced the free-riding problem. All Salafis associated with the network felt themselves necessarily part of the mobilization success. It was natural therefore that these calls immediately reverberated, fuelling the zeal of resistance rooted among members in the network. The magnificence of jihad, which had frequently been discussed in religious lectures glorified in their religious publications, had apparently been imparted.

The best cadres among the Salafis provided themselves as the backbone of mobilization active in attracting support, recruiting masses for rallies and demonstrations, persuading all potential *mujāhids*, and collecting money from donors. They opened booths to register aspiring *mujāhids* at public venues, including street intersections, markets and mosques. Without hesitation or reluctance, they frequently addressed passers-by telling them about the ferocity of Christian enemies, while distributing the forms for donation and registration to participate in jihad in the Moluccas. Simultaneously, their leaders persuaded civilian and military elites to give additional support and launched campaigns by visiting a number of cities in Indonesia. They sought to convince other aspirant *mujāhids* to enlist themselves alongside the Laskar Jihad fighters prepared to go to the Moluccas.

***For the Defence of the Muslim* Umma**

The Salafis sought to frame their actions by placing the Moluccan issue more coherently within the context of global conflicts in the Muslim world. In what can be referred to as a manifesto, they stated that having succeeded in winning the cold war against the Soviet Union, the United States lost no time in proclaiming itself the sole superpower given the prerogative to subjugate Islam, accused of being the greatest and most dangerous enemy of the globalized

[80] See Tarrow (1998), pp. 112-3. See also Klandermans (1988), pp. 183-91.

world. The Salafis interpreted the success of the United States as a victory of Zionists and (Christian) Crusaders, who had long been bearing a grudge against and nurturing a hatred of Islam. Conflicts and violence that had erupted in different parts of the Muslim world, including Bosnia, the Philippines, North Africa and Chechnya, they declared, were all evidence of the fierceness of the enemies of Islam in their efforts to eliminate all Muslims from the face of the earth.[81]

Within the framework of the conspiracy rhetoric blaming Zionists and Christian Crusaders as those responsible for the escalation of the Moluccan conflict, the Salafis reconstructed social reality, to use Klanderman's term, which encouraged an analytical shift from individuals to groups.[82] This attempt was important to establish the foundation of their collective action. Through the reconstruction of social reality, the consciousness of the movement's potential participants was raised considerably and specific attention was attracted among sympathetic spectators. As Tarrow puts it, frame is a message related to the context of interests and conflicts in play to which the emotions of people are appealed.[83] On the basis of their alternative view of social reality, the Salafis valued the meaning of their actions and created a new collective identity. This new collective identity would in turn determine the orientation of their action, which is instrumental to the success of mobilization.[84]

It goes without saying that by emphasizing 'the spiral of the conflict' and linking it to the much broader interest of Indonesian Muslims, the Salafis in fact began to enter the process of frame alignment. Their emotional definition of the situation facilitated the making of what David A. Snow and his collaborators (1986) refer to as 'frame bridging', which enabled them to incorporate elements produced by sectors of public opinion that might otherwise remain separated from one another. This step was followed by 'frame amplification', when the Salafi leaders sought to articulate an interpretation of the world that could otherwise remain confused and vague. They drew a clear-cut definition of the world as 'us' and 'them' and claimed to be in the right. Through 'frame extension', their concern with the Moluccan conflict was extended to include more general goals that revolve around the issue of the defence of Indonesian Muslims from the attacks of belligerent infidels. All these processes led to 'frame transformation', which rendered their messages more coherent with the dominant interpretation of reality found in public opinion.[85]

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[81] Ja'far Umar Thalib, *Buku Petunjuk dan Latar Belakang Pengiriman Laskar Jihad ke Maluku* (Malang: Kadiv. Penerangan FKAWJ Malang, 2000), pp. 2-3.

[82] Bert Klandermans, 'The Social Construction of Protest and Multi-organizational Fields', in A. D. Morris and Carol McClurg Mueller (eds.), *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 92-3.

[83] Tarrow (1998), pp. 107-8.

[84] Melucci (1996), p. 74.

[85] Snow et al. (1986), pp. 461-81. See also Della Porta and Diani (1999), pp. 74-5.

Figures VI and VII: Ja'far Umar Thalib's book and the monthly *Sabili* explain the Moluccan issue under the framework of conspiracy theory.

In the Salafis' alternative view of social reality, the United States appeared to be a floating empty signifier, in which injustice, ferocity and domination were identified. It has become a master frame that has provided the medium through which collective actors associated with different movements within a cycle assign the blame for the problem they are attempting to ameliorate. As a mode of interpretation, it is inclusive, in that it allows for extensive ideational amplification and extension. The extent of this master frame's resonance is determined by a set of the signifieds attached to it. Herein lies the significance of naming Zionists and Crusaders as the parties responsible for the United States policies. They are two 'main enemies of Islam' whose enmity and cruelty have been vividly exploited in the Islamist discourses. This identification could produce emotional pivots around which the future direction of Salafi activism turns. At the same time, it provided a common language that could be used to build alliances across specific movements and to articulate a more comprehensive criticism of the systematic form of domination that affected all the movement constituencies in various ways.

The Salafis defined what happened in Indonesia from the perspective of global conspiracy theory. They argued that as the world's largest Muslim country has the potential to become one a superpower to challenge the hegemony of Zionist-Crusader international forces, Indonesia has long been the target of destruction by the enemies of Islam. They claimed that these enemies

have succeeded not only in perpetrating their evil plans through economic sabotage, human rights issues and other activities aimed at setting in motion the reformation process that had resulted in the collapse of the New Order regime, but also in inflaming riots, turmoil and communal conflicts in various regions including Aceh, Papua and the Moluccas. From their point of view, the present-day escalation of conflicts in those regions was a clear sign of their seriousness about eliminating the Republic of Indonesia.[86]

Furthermore, the Salafis questioned the legitimacy of the domestic socio-political arrangements that, they claimed, had created the opportunity for the enemies of Islam to realize their ambitions. Ja'far Umar Thalib argued that the enemies of Islam were able to perpetrate their evil plans in Indonesia because the domestic situation was undergoing dramatic changes marked by the breakdown of socio-cultural bounds, systematic condemnation of the Indonesian military and an increase in security disturbances. He was convinced that the momentum for this destruction was created when Wahid, whom he blamed as a leader indifferent to the fate of Muslims and inclined instead toward sympathy for Zionists, Christians and Communists, came to power. He cited Wahid's policies, such as the welcoming of an Israeli trade delegation, his proposal to revive the Indonesian Communist Party and his encouragement of the widespread availability of leftist and communist-leaning books, as evidence of his intimacy with 'the three main enemies of Islam'.[87] 'This was not the only evidence', said Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'because Wahid had even tried hard to eliminate the power of the Indonesian Armed Forces and the Police as the guardians of the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia through the issue of human rights violation'.[88] He stated that this error was an unforgivable sin on Wahid's part, and he should not have been given any place in the political arena of Indonesia.[89]

To achieve frame resonance the Salafis attempted to contextualize their concern with the Moluccan issue by linking it to rumours about the involvement of the Moluccan Protestant Church and PDI-P in initiating the conflict. In a manner similar to the discourse produced by the Islamist print media, they accused the Moluccan Protestant Church and PDI-P of being local collaborators of RMS, operating to dismiss all Muslims from the Moluccan islands in order to consequently christianize the islands by separating them from the Republic of Indonesia. They were convinced that the Moluccan conflict was simply a 'pilot

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[86] Ja'far Umar Thalib, *Resolusi Jihad Sebagai Jawaban Atas Pembantaian Muslimin di Maluku*, speech record delivered at the *tabligh akbar* on 6 April 2000 (Yogyakarta: FKAWJ, 2000). Summary of this speech was published in *www.laskarjihad.or.id/resolusijihad*.

[87] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Saatnya Mengobarkan Jihad', *Salafy* 34 (2000), p. 2.

[88] Ja'far Umar Thalib, *Menuju Kemenangan Mujahidin dan Situasi Terakhir di Maluku*, cassette record of the speech delivered at the *tabligh akbar* in Yogyakarta, on 16 July 2000 (Yogyakarta: FKAWJ, 2000).

[89] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Target Kami Menyingkirkan Gus Dur', interview, *Panji Masyarakat* 1,VI (26 April 2000).

project' of the enemies of Islam to christianize Indonesia within the framework of the '*Proyek Kristenisasi Salib*', or a Christianization crusade led by the Zionist-cum-Christian international powers, the success of which would determine their subsequent agendas.[90]

The Salafis concluded that the Moluccan conflict was in fact a war between Muslims and Christians. This conclusion projected the medieval Christian crusades into the present in such a way that it reinforced the religious dimension of the conflict:

> 'The Moluccan conflict is a rebellion launched by Christians in the Moluccas under the operation code "Troops of Christ, God of Love and Affection". It is a Crusade whose aim is to expel all Muslims from the islands, on which a Christian State of Alifuru (which includes Papua, the Moluccas, Eastern Nusa Tenggara, and East Timor) will be established, separated from the Republic of Indonesia'.[91]

They then gave various examples in order to expose the ferocity of Christians claimed to have been fighting in the spirit of the Crusades. Mutilated bodies said to be Muslims massacred by Christians, damaged mosques and graffiti containing messages that insulted Islam were shown to support their claim. In so doing, they exploited more coherently images of victimization, which, as Elliot Colla (2004) puts it, provide an aura of righteousness to legitimate violence in the cause of defence.[92]

By projecting the image of the Moluccan conflict as the result of a conspiracy contrived by the enemies of Muslims to undermine Islam and destroy the integration of the Republic of Indonesia, the Salafis combined religious rhetoric and nationalist sentiment perfectly. God and nation, state and Islam; these concepts were all blurred in their rhetoric. This fusion undoubtedly made their argument stronger. They now had sufficient grounds to claim the prerogative of saving Islam and the Muslim *umma* from the attacks of belligerent infidels, and, at the same time, of guarding the integrity of the Republic of Indonesia in a way reminiscent of the slogan of the Indonesian soldiers. In this way, they shared incentives among members to the extent that they emerged as heroes for their religion and religious fellows and simultaneously the patriots for their beloved state. This self-proclaimed image in turn bolstered their new collective identity, which would mobilize followers and provide cohesion.

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[90] Ja'far Umar Thalib, *Menghadapi Kristenisasi di Indonesia*, cassette record of the speech delivered at the *tabligh akbar* in Riau on 12 August 2000 (Yogyakarta: FKAWJ, 2000).

[91] Ja'far Umar Thalib, *Laskar Jihad Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah, Mempelopori Perlawanan Terhadap Kedurjanaan Hegemoni Salibis-Zionis Internasional di Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: FKAWJ, 2001), pp. 34-5.

[92] Elliot Colla, 'A Culture of Righteousness and Martyrdom', *ISIM Newsletter* 14 (June 2004), pp. 6-7.

Confronted with the complexity of the Moluccan conflict, the Salafis saw no solution except jihad. They insisted that jihad was necessary particularly because the state did not have sufficient power and political will to protect the Indonesian Muslims from the attacks of belligerent infidels. They were convinced that with jihad the manoeuvres of the enemies of Islam seeking to undermine the growth of Islam in Indonesia could be halted and, at the same time, the fate of Moluccan Muslims could be rescued. In addition, jihad would set Indonesia free from the politico-economic crisis that had threatened its existence and integration. In short, jihad was viewed as the only way to solve myriad problems afflicting Indonesian Muslims today and restore the integration of the Indonesian nation-state.[93] They emphasized jihad as the self-defence mechanism and the strategy that would allow them to challenge the evil plots by those inimical to Islam. 'This is an imperative when Muslims are attacked by belligerent infidels', said Ja'far Umar Thalib.[94]

The Salafi leaders demonstrated the magnificence of jihad by connecting it to the concept of martyrdom, and thereby multiplied the incentives for potential fighters to join Laskar Jihad. They asserted that those who fulfil the call for jihad to assist their Muslim brothers attacked by belligerent infidels deserve to receive the title of martyr if killed on the so-called jihad battlefields. Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, another ideologue of the Salafis, pointed out that the reward for a martyr is nothing less than heaven, by quoting many passages in the Qur'an and the Prophetic Traditions. Expounding on these sources, he highlighted the distinctiveness of martyrs in their life after death in several ways: they are pure Muslims buried in the clothes in which they die and do not need to be washed before burial; their self-sacrifice and meritorious act render them free from sin and therefore they are not subject to the post-mortem interrogation by the angels Munkar and Nakir; they bypass 'purgatory' and proceed to one of the highest locations in heaven near the Throne of God.[95]

The Fatwās on Jihad

The determination to fight jihad in the Moluccas required the Salafis, as part of the transnational *da'wa* community, to request *fatwās* from a number of prominent religious authorities in the Middle East, all of whom were linked to Bin Bāz, the former head of the Saudi Arabian Council of Senior *'Ulamā'*. These included 'Abd al-Razzāq ibn 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-'Abbād, Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī, Rabī' ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī, Ṣāliḥ al-Suhaymī, Aḥmad Yaḥyā ibn Muḥammad al-Najm, and Wāḥid al-Jābirī. In requesting the *fatwās*, the Salafis

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[93] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Jihad Fi Sabilillah: Solusi Problematika Bangsa dan Negara Indonesia', *Salafy* 34 (2000), pp. 2-5.

[94] Ja'far Umar Thalib, *Jihad, Solusi Akhir Menghadapi Separatis RMS*, speech cassette record (Yogyakarta: FKAWJ, 2000).

[95] Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, *Keutamaan Jihad dan Mujahidin*, cassette record of *Tasjilat Ihyaussunnah al-Islamiyyah* (Yogyakarta: DPP FKAWJ, 2000).

had conveyed their questions via fax and telephone to their own cadres studying there, who then presented them to the *muftīs*. Because of some reluctance shown by the *muftīs* in giving the expected *fatwās*, Ja'far Umar Thalib and Muhammad Umar As-Sewed came to visit them in order to persuade them personally, providing some additional information.[96] It is worth mentioning that though not binding, the position of *fatwā* as a religious decree specifically given by learned (qualified) persons (*muftīs*) in response to questions posed by *mustaftīs,* that is, the persons who request the opinions, is crucial in the Muslim world. It has become an integral part of the legal practice and discourse of Muslims.[97]

According to the Indonesian translation of the *fatwās*, the six *muftīs* made the following pronouncements. In the opinion of 'Abd al-Muḥsin al-'Abbād, a Medina *muftī*, to go to the battlefield in the Moluccas to defend Muslims in the islands is lawful (*disyariatkan*), provided that it is not harmful to the Muslims themselves and the Muslims are in a defensive position. Aḥmad al-Najm, a Meccan *muftī* and member of the Saudi Arabian senior *'ulamā'* committee, agreed with the necessity of waging jihad in the Moluccas and suggested the jihad was an obligation for Muslims in order to help their oppressed brothers. He pronounced, 'This obligation must be fulfilled by Muslims at different levels in accordance with their individual abilities; some must help with their bodies, others with their property, and others with their minds'. But he warned the Salafis to first take the following steps: (1) To choose a representative who would meet the ruler, to advise and approach him; (2) If the ruler took their suggestions into consideration, he should be obeyed; (3) If the ruler rejected their suggestions, Muslims were allowed to rebel against him as long as they had sufficient power to afford this step.[98]

More obvious, the engagement of Muslims in the Moluccan conflict was judged by Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi`ī, a *muftī* in Yemen, to be an individual duty *(*Ar. *farḍ 'ayn)* for Indonesian Muslims and to be a collective duty *(*Ar. *farḍ kifāya)* for Muslims outside Indonesia. He clearly asked the Salafis 'to arise and conduct jihad in the name of God and overthrow Christians who occupy Muslim territory' and advised all Muslims 'to assist the *mujāhids* by contributing property and any valuable thing, because God will bestow guidance on those

[96] Interview with Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, Degolan, Kaliurang, Yogyakarta, 20 December 2002

[97] For an overview about *fatwa,* see Muhammad Khalid Masud, Brinkley Messick, and David S. Powers, 'Introduction', in Muhammad Khalid Masud, Brinkley Messick, and David S. Powers (eds.), *Islamic Legal Interpretation: Muftis and Their Fatwas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996). As for the dynamics of *fatwa* in the context of Indonesian Islam, see Nico J.G. Kaptein, 'The Voice of the "Ulama": Fatwas and Religious Authority in Indonesia', *Archives De Sciences Sociales Des Religions* 125 (2004), pp. 115-130.

[98] All the *fatwas* quoted here were disseminated on the deactivated Laskar Jihad website (*www.laskarjihad.or.id/risalah/fatwa*), in the periodical *Salafy*, and in various interviews given by Ja'far Umar Thalib. For the Indonesian texts, see Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Menepis Rekayasa Fatwa: Seputar Jihad di Maluku', *Salafy* 33 (2000), p. 8-9. See also 'Fatwa Para Ulama tentang Jihad di Maluku', *www.laskarjihad.or.id/risalah/fatwa*.

who help each other'. Taking the same tone, Rabī' ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī, a *muftī* in Saudi Arabia, argued that the engagement of Muslims in the Moluccan war was an individual duty *(farḍ 'ayn),* since Muslims were being attacked by Christians.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

مقبل بن هادي الوادعي   تاريخ: ٢٦ / ذو الحجة / ١٤٢٠هـ

الإخوة الأفاضل من أبناء اندونيسيا ومن طلبة
اهل السنة ومن ذوي العقيدة السلفية وقد
اعتدى النصارى على جزيرة مالوكو وقتلوا قدر
خمسة آلاف من الرجال والنساء والأطفال وهدموا
قدر مائتي مسجد وأكثر والآلاف من البيوت فقام
الإخوة الأفاضل السلفيون بدعوة الناس
الى الجهاد في سبيل الله وطرد المعتدين المحتلين
وهم يحتاجون الى مساعدة مالية فعسى الله أن
يوفق أهل الخير للتعاون بالمال والدعاء وانتم
تعرفون أن اعداء الإسلام يريدون تنصير المسلمين
واحتلال اراضيهم واستعبادهم. وفقنا الله جميعا
لما يحب ويرضى

مقبل بن هادي الوادعي

اليمن – صعدة ص. ب: ٩٠٠٧٠ هاتف وفاكس ٥١٣٠٨٧

Figure VIII: The *Fatwā* of Muqbil Ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī on the obligation of all Muslims to participate in jihad in the Moluccas, which I copied from a file in Laskar Jihad's possession.

The necessity of helping the Moluccan Muslims was also declared by Wāḥid al-Jābirī, another *muftī* in Medina. He was of the opinion that to defend Muslims being attacked by their enemies is compulsory. The same point was argued by Ṣāliḥ al-Suhaymī, also a *muftī* in Medina. He stated that jihad is mandatory in troubled areas, providing Muslims have sufficient power to undertake it. But he warned the Salafis not to neglect their main task of conducting Islamic missions (*da'wa*). Addressing the Salafis directly, this *muftī* continued, '[Y]ou must adhere to the *salafi* way (*manhāj al-salafī*) at all times and call people to adhere to it. Should you have strength to help your Muslim brothers attacked by their Christian enemies, do so. Should you not have such strength, concentrate on *da'wa* alone'.

On the basis of these *fatwās*, Ja'far Umar Thalib convincingly declared the Moluccan conflict a holy war against Christian enemies attacking Muslims. He emphasized that engagement in the war was a duty that should be undertaken by Muslims in order to honour Allah's message. Quoting Ibn Taymiyya, he insisted, 'Should our enemy attack Muslims, to confront the attack would be an obligation incumbent on the Muslims who are being attacked and it would be compulsory for other Muslims to help them'. He argued that this was obligatory because, having succumbed to the pressure from Zionist-cum-Christian international powers, the government did not have either the ability or the power to put an end to the war.[99]

There is no doubt that the issuance of these *fatwās* was significant in the process of mobilizing volunteers for what would be a dangerous, violent collective action. Having been issued by the prominent Salafi authorities, these *fatwās* first of all provided Indonesian Salafis associated with Ja'far Umar Thalib the legitimacy to call for jihad in the Moluccas. This legitimacy was crucial for the Salafis to achieve an internal consensus and provided a solid foundation for them to go beyond their fundamental doctrinal position, requiring a consistency in following the non-political *da'wa* strategy. The need for this legitimacy was demonstrated when opposition was voiced by some elements among the Indonesian Salafis themselves. Those associated with Abu Nida, for instance, strongly criticized this call by reminding them that Salafi *da'wa* was their original cause. They circulated opinions underlining the illegitimacy of Ja'far Umar Thalib's call for jihad, while indicating the fallacy of the *fatwās* supporting the call.[100] They argued that,

> '[] …as emphasized by our mentors, such as Ibrahīm al-Ruhaylī, Ṣāliḥ al-Suhaymī, 'Ubayd al-Jābirī, 'Abd al-Ṣamad al-

[99] For a further account on this issue, see Noorhaidi Hasan, 'Between Transnational Interest and Domestic Politics: Understanding Middle Eastern *Fatwa*s on Jihad in the Moluccas', *Islamic Law and Society,* Theme Issue edited by Michael Laffan and Nico Kaptein, 12: 1, (January 2005), pp. 73-92.

[100] See Armen Halim Jasman, 'Rekayasa Fatwa?' *As-Sunnah* 5: 1 (2001), pp. 5-7.

> Suhaymī, among other *muftīs*, who gathered in Ṣāliḥ al-Suhaymī's house, that what our Salafi brothers would carry out in the Moluccas is not jihad, since jihad should be waged under the banner of Islam and with the approval of a legitimate *imām*… It cannot be imagined that jihad is fought only because of a conflict taking place between Christians and Muslims'.[101]

Armed with the *fatwās*, however, Ja'far Umar Thalib succeeded in eradicating hesitation among some Salafis and other potential fighters to join Laskar Jihad. Quoting the *fatwās*, he assessed the meaning of jihad as a mechanism to defend Muslims from the attacks of belligerent infidels. In these *fatwās* the defensive character of jihad is underscored. It specifically connotes a holy war against Christian enemies attacking Muslims in the Moluccas and trying to expel them from the islands. The perception of the Moluccan conflict as a case of thousands of Muslims being killed and expelled was emphasized by Ja'far Umar Thalib when he requested the *fatwās*. Explicitly, some of the *fatwās* emphasize that jihad in the Moluccas is lawful as long as it is needed to protect Muslims from the attacks of their enemies. This emphasis spelled out that legitimacy was contingent upon a particular context.

Although these *fatwās* insisted on the defensive nature of jihad, and thereby confirmed the absence of a Qur'anic sanction of permanent violence or violence which is not structured by a designated end, they could be used to clarify the possible benefits that violence sometimes brings in a certain context. Believing that they were God's army fighting a jihad against the forces of evil, they considered that the end justified the means. In a situation when Muslims are perceived to be in the battle against the 'Zionist-cum-Christian forces seeking to undermine Islam and the Muslim *umma*', violent jihad is not only legitimate but also obligatory as a holy war to defend Islam.

While insisting the defensive nature of jihad, these *fatwās* mentioned some prerogatives requiring the Indonesian Salafis to follow the Salafi *manhāj* consistently in fighting jihad in the Moluccas. These prerogatives might be crucial to distinguish their jihad from the Salafi-jihadis' international jihad movement, which acquired a foundation in the Afghan War. During the war Salafis worldwide gave increasing attention to the concept of jihad popularized by 'Abd Allāh 'Azzām, which is identical to armed struggle against outside forces, such as state powers or tyrannical armies. After the war ended and they returned to their home countries, their fervour to conduct jihad continued to burn. Their unflagging eagerness to fight was particularly intensified when they heard about the miseries afflicting Muslims in other trouble spots like Kashmir, the Southern Philippines, Bosnia and Chechnya. They argued that it is obligatory

[101] Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas and Abdur Rahman at-Tamimi, 'Nasehat dan Fatwa Syeikh Ibrahim Ar-Ruhaili', *As-Sunnah* 5: 3 (2001), pp. 35-6.

to wage jihad to liberate these regions from the invasion of the enemies of Islam, as had been done in Afghanistan.[102]

The present Salafi authorities in Saudi Arabia in particular and in other Gulf countries in general faced a delicate problem in connection with the global question of jihad. One the one hand, they did not want to undermine their position as defenders of Muslims against attacks by belligerent infidels. At the same time they needed to defend themselves against Bin Lāden's criticism of complicity with America. Hence, in addition to supporting the dispatch of Salafi volunteers to wage jihad in trouble spots like Kashmir and Bosnia, they were attempting to develop a counter-discourse that would answer the challenge posed by Bin Lāden. It is no surprise that a number of prominent Salafi authorities, including Bin Bāz, Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī and Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn, were happy to issue *fatwās* encouraging the presence of volunteers in those regions. But it should be noted that they insisted jihad is only allowed for defensive goals, thereby undermining the position of the Salafi-jihadis associated with Bin Lāden, the successor of 'Azzām, who broadened the meaning of jihad to include a permanent armed struggle against any infidel oppression embodied in the so-called 'Judeo-Crusader' coalition led by the United States.[103]

Their ambiguity notwithstanding, these *fatwās* facilitated the attempts of Indonesian Salafis to present their causes to a much broader audience, the transnational Muslim community, or *umma*. Solidarity from Muslims across the world, particularly in the transnational network of Salafis, inspired them to make their calls for jihad in the Moluccas resonate more loudly. Transnational solidarity is vital to a movement that lacks solid bases in domestic social networks. The shift in venues might stimulate the involvement of new or more sympathetic actors to their cause. In the struggle of a group to mount collective action, this form of solidarity also has the potential to become an effective instrument in providing self-confidence and a strong sense of identity among the movement's participants. In the meantime, it can improve the bargaining position of the group in relation to the government authorities or other movements, especially when the domestic access of claimants is blocked, or where those making claims are too weak politically for their voices to be heard.

Perhaps more important, through these *fatwās* the Salafis sought to gain access to new kinds of resources across borders that would guarantee the success of their collective action. These are no different from the types of resources that might be mobilized at a domestic level, such as political support, recruits and money. But the symbolic significance of these resources is much greater than the domestic ones, because they may shore up the righteousness of the struggle undertaken by a group. Without the *fatwās,* nothing can be hoped for from these

[102] Wiktorowicz (2001), p. 24.
[103] Ibid.

types of resources. The *fatwās* could at least be expected to serve as a bridge facilitating the communication between the movement's actors and people with an ideological affinity from different countries such as Saudi Arabia, who were possibly interested in offering something to them. For the Indonesian Salafis, as part of the transnational network of the *da'wa* movement sponsored by Saudi Arabia, financial (and other) support from the state or related institutions and individuals had so far proved highly crucial to undertaking their activities.

Structures of Mobilization

Social movements do not depend on framing alone; they must bring people together in the field and assure their own future after the exhilaration of mobilization has passed. In this respect the very existence of FKAWJ was crucial for the Salafi campaign to recruit and dispatch voluntary fighters for jihad in the Moluccas. This organization can be seen as a transformation of the Salafi informal social network rooted in numerous centres of Salafi activism, as shown above. In contrast to the network, FKAWJ had the characteristic of a strong, formal, hierarchical and bureaucratic organization. This kind of organization functions perfectly as a means through which actors in a social movement can communicate their messages to certain targeted audiences. As clearly suggested by William Gamson (1975) in his seminal study of collective action, a formal centralized, bureaucratic organization constitutes the most effective mechanism for the success of a social movement because of the readily available sources of labour, efficient decision-making structures and a high degree of 'combat readiness'.[104]

The importance of FKAWJ lay particularly in its hierarchical, bureaucratic decision-making structure, which incorporated primary personal attributes of members into the pursuit of collective goals that imply underlying bonds of community. It served as what Mario Diani calls a 'connective structure' that linked leaders and followers, centre and periphery, and different parts of the movement sector.[105] The presence of this connective structure was instrumental to guarantee that the messages and symbols conveyed by movement actors through the process of frame alignment could reach targeted audiences.

In fact, through FKAWJ, the messages Ja'far Umar Thalib and other organization leaders wanted to convey quickly flew into small units of membership in the network and other aspirant *mujāhids*, reaching remote areas in the countryside. But these messages were first received and managed by the Salafi *ustāzs* responsible for the development of the units. In this sense, the position of the *ustāzs* was decisive as intermediaries who exerted a direct

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[104] William A. Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest* (Homewood: Dorsey Press, 1975).

[105] Mario Diani, *A Structural Analysis of the Italian Environmental Movement* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995).

influence on their disciples. They were in fact in the foremost line in the process of mobilizing fighters. Their loyalty in their support of Ja'far Umar Thalib would be crucial in determining whether his calls for jihad in the Moluccas would be successful.

As a formal organization, FKAWJ had a relatively modern structure topped by its Dewan Pimpinan Pusat (Central Executive Board, DPP). Its headquarters were located in Yogyakarta, under the same roof as the Pesantren Ihyaus Sunnah. Under this board there were five divisions, including the Financial Division, Social Division, Health Division, Information Division, and Special Force (*Pasukan Khusus*) charged with special duties responsible for the success of achieving organization goals. The best cadres were recruited to fill board positions and served as the organization's backbone, spending much of their time planning events, making predictions about consequences, and organizing programmes of action. The most important figure among them was Ayip Syafruddin, the chairman of board, who supervised division chiefs and members. In fact, he was the man who proposed the concept of FKAWJ and set out the way this organization should be operated.

Born in Cirebon, Ayip Syafruddin was a graduate of the Psychology Faculty at the Muhammadiyah University in Surakarta. His interest in Islamic activism grew in his first year at the university. He had been engaged in the NII movement before deciding to join in Salafi activism. He claimed that the inspiration to establish FKAWJ came from his discussions with a number of Islamist leaders, notably Ahmad Sumargono and Eggy Sujana.[106] As the leaders of KISDI and PPMI, respectively, both had experience in organizing mass action. In several meetings they shared insights about the art of mobilization that helped Ayip Syafruddin perform his main duty as FKAWJ chairman. He also played a role as a negotiator lobbying 'important personalities' in Jakarta and other cities. In doing this job, he was assisted by Ma'ruf Bahrun, the general secretary of the organization. Before joining Ja'far Umar Thalib's activities, this engineering graduate of the Agriculture Faculty of Haluuleo University, Palu, Central Sulawesi, had also been a follower of the NII movement.[107]

Above the central executive board, there was an advisory body, a supreme religious board, led by Ja'far Umar Thalib and comprised of eighty-four Salafi *ustāzs* scattered all over Indonesia. This advisory board had several commissions, including a *fatwā* commission, a training commission, a public relations commission, and a foreign affairs commission. Its authority covered such tasks as the appointment and removal of FKAWJ's central executive board members. In practice, the advisory board became a highly powerful body, defining all general policies of FKAWJ.[108] In addition to Ja'far Umar Thalib and Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, the supreme religious board included Abu Munzir

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[106] Interview with Ayip Syafruddin, Jakarta, 2 November 2001.
[107] Interview with Ma'ruf Bahrun, Jakarta, 2 November 2001.
[108] Interview with Abu Zaki Eri Ziyad, Yogyakarta, 21 November 2001.

Zul Akmal, Abu Muhammad Zulkarnain and Lukman Ba'abduh. As disciples of Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī, they have wide influence among Indonesian Salafis.

The central executive board coordinated provincial (Dewan Pimpinan Wilayah, DPW) and district (Dewan Pimpinan Daerah, DPD) branches. There were ten provincial branches: DPW Banyumas, DPW Jakarta and environs, DPW West Java, DPW Central Java, DPW East Java, DPW Kalimantan, DPW Riau, DPW North Sumatera, DPW Sulawesi and DPW Yogyakarta. DPW Banyumas supervised DPD Banjar Negara, Cilacap, Kebumen, Purbalingga, Purwokerto and Wonosobo. DPW Jakarta and surrounding supervised DPD Bangka-Belitung, Jakarta, Kotabumi, Metro and Tangerang. DPW West Java supervised DPD Bandung, Cirebon, Indramayu and Kuningan. DPW Central Java supervised DPD Brebes, Pekalongan, Pemalang, Semarang and Tegal. DPW East Java supervised DPD Surabaya, Jombang, Jember, Madiun, Magetan, Malang and Bali. DPW Kalimantan supervised DPD Banjarmasin and Balikpapan. DPW Riau supervised DPD Batam, Jambi, Padang and Pekanbaru. DPW North Sumatra supervised DPD Medan, Batubara, and Langkat. DPW Sulawesi supervised DPD Makasar, Bau-Bau and Kendari. DPW Yogyakarta supervised DPD Bantul, Klaten, Magelang, and Surakarta. In additon to this, the Laskar Jihad had several representatives abroad, including Australia, the Yemen, Singapore and Malaysia.

Utilizing its structural command links, FKAWJ mobilized thousands of jihad volunteers all over Indonesia and published and distributed *Maluku Hari Ini* (The Moluccas Today), a free two-page pamphlet of up to date information about the Moluccan conflict. This pamphlet later developed into the *Buletin Laskar Jihad Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah*, a sixteen-page colour bulletin including photographs of Muslim massacres by Christians. It also established an ultra-modern website at *laskarjihad.org/or.id* that was regularly updated. Here the support from the cadres experienced as activists of campus media and university student organizations was crucial.

Simultaneously, FKAWJ produced stickers, T-shirts, emblems, recorded sermons and books exalting the magnificence of jihad for mass consumption. These emerged as symbols that furnished the identity of the group and served as commodified emblems of violence. Consumption of these symbols in turn structured channels of participation. The role of symbols as vehicles for representation has been emphasized by cultural anthropologists. Symbols create or constitute the system of meaning that 'make up' culture. In this sense, symbols have the capability of determining how different aspects of life are conceptualized and experienced by participants in a culture, that is, how individuals in that culture construct their world.[109]

[109] See Margot L. Lyon, 'Missing Emotion: The Limitation of Cultural Constructionism in the Study of Emotion', *Cultural Anthropology* 10: 2 (May 1995), pp. 244-63.

MALULU HARI INI

Edisi 50 (1 November 2000)

Informasi Laskar Jihad dan kondisi terakhir Maluku. Diperoleh dari reporter MHI di Ambon. Diterbitkan oleh **Komisi Dana Laskar Jihad Korwil DIY** Sedan RT 5/34 No.99 Sleman Tlp 864178 e-mail: *kdyogyakarta@fkawj.org*

Umat Islam Ambon Kutuk Penganiayaan Terhadap 12 Anggota *Laskar Jihad*

Ambon, MHI (28 Oktober 2000)

Peristiwa penculikan dan penganiayaan 12 anggota Laskar Jihad Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah oleh oknum aparat gabungan Kopassus, Marinir dan Paskhas, Rabu (25/10/2000) telah menggegerkan kaum muslimin Ambon dan sekitarnya. Tindakan yang sangat biadab dan merendahkan umat Islam, apalagi penangkapan tersebut dilakukan tanpa adanya bukti bahwa Laskar Jihad yang melakukan penyerangan ke pemukiman Kristen di kawasan Gunung Nona dan Benteng Atas.

Barang-barang yang disebutkan sebagai barang bukti, sebagaimana diberitakan Harian Suara Maluku (26/10/2000), RRI Maluku yang direlay RRI seluruh Indonesia seperti pelontar mortir, rompi anti peluru, amunisi mortir, helm militer, 11 sepatu PDL dan PDH, senjata rakitan, bom, panah beracun, 9 buah parang, dan jerigen berisi bensin, adalah fitnah adanya.

Bahkan daerah penangkapan juga diputarbalikkan oleh pihak Kristen, disebutkan anggota Laskar Jihad ditangkap di kawasan gunung Nona dan Benteng Atas. Padahal mereka ditangkap seusai shalat Subuh dan mengikuti ta'lim (pengajian) di kawasan pemukiman Muslim Air Salobar. Bahkan para anggota Laskar Jihad yang ditempatkan di Air Salobar yang seringkali mengadakan bakti sosial tersebut sama sekali tidak mengetahui peristiwa penyerangan ke daerah pemukiman Kristen tersebut. Apalagi pada saat kejadian ternyata anggota Laskar tengah berjaga di kawasan Air Salobar bersama aparat keamanan TNI AD Batalyon Infanteri (Yonif) 403 Yogyakarta dan Batalyon Zeni Tempur (Zipur) 2 yang bertugas di daerah tersebut.

Demikian juga pemberitaan TVRI stasiun Ambon, Rabu (25/10/2000) pukul 19.30 WIT yang memuat pernyataan Kepala Staf Kodam (Kasdam) Kol. Agus Suyitno yang tertipu oleh laporan bawahannya Dansektor Murtad Kolonel Agustinus Siswanto, menyatakan bahwa tidak ada penyiksaan terhadap 12 Laskar Jihad Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah. Kasdam menyatakan: pernyataan bahwa aparat keamanan melakukan penyiksaan terhadap Laskar Jihad adalah tidak benar dan itu merupakan ulah provokator. Bahkan Kasdam menyatakan akan menindak tegas bila terbukti ada aparat yang melakukan penyiksaan.

Pernyataan Kasdam tersebut ditanggapi kaum muslimin dengan sinis, sebab kaum muslimin di seluruh Ambon sudah tahu bahwa ke-12 Laskar Jihad Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah memang benar-benar telah dianiaya. Ke-12 Laskar Jihad yang masih menjalani perawatan intensif di RS Al-Fatah dan Poliklinik Laskar Jihad itu, Kamis (26/10/2000), mendapat kunjungan kaum muslimin dari berbagai penjuru kota Ambon.

Hal ini merupakan tindakan yang telah menjurus pada tindak anarkhis, melanggar Hak Asasi Manusia yang bertentangan dengan norma-norma kehidupan berbangsa dan bernegara di Indonesia. Tim advokasi Forum Komunikasi Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah segera bertindak mengusut secara tuntas tindakan tersebut dengan meminta bantuan lewat kuasa hukum FKAWJ yakni Lembaga Bantuan Hukum Universitas Islam Indonesia Yogyakarta, demikian tanggapan Ketua DPP FKAWJ, Ayip Syafrudin S.Psi.

Banjiri Al-Fatah

Sementara itu, Kamis (26/10/2000), muslimin dari berbagai penjuru Ambon membanjiri RS Al-Fatah untuk menjenguk dan menghibur Laskar Jihad yang telah dianiaya tersebut. Suara muslimin mendukung penuh Laskar Jihad dan menyatakan mengutuk tindakan aparat gabungan terhadap Laskar Jihad. Bahkan seluruh muslimin menyatakan tindakan tersebut sebagai perbuatan biadab dan melanggar HAM (Hak Asasi Muslim) yang tidak mungkin dilakukan kecuali oleh orang-orang kafir atau munafik.

"Ini adalah perbuatan biadab dan pelanggaran terhadap HAM. Kalau saya masih muda, saya akan pertaruhkan nyawa saya untuk membalas perbuatan mereka ini", kata Mochamad Zein (70), seorang warga Kebun Cengkeh yang sedang menjenguk ke RS Al-Fatah. "Mereka datang ke Ambon untuk membela agama dan saudara-saudara mereka dari kebiadaban orang Kristen. Mereka rela meninggalkan orangtua dan saudara-saudara mereka, juga anak istri mereka demi berjuang di jalan Allah, disini mereka malah diperlakukan dengan cara yang sangat keterlaluan. Semoga Allah membinasakan aparat gabungan", tandas lelaki tua ini. Demikian juga penjenguk lain, menyatakan kebenciannya terhadap perbuatan aparat gabungan tersebut. "Ini seperti cara-cara bahkan lebih biadab dari PKI", kata ketua Pemuda Muhammadiyah Ambon, Ir. Salim Syamsudin yang ikut menjenguk

Tiga orang Laskar Jihad korban kesewenang-wenangan aparat gabungan, Abdurrahman (23), Mohammad (24), dan Abdul Basir (20) dirawat di RS Al-Fatah. Abdurrahman menderita luka di dahi akibat pukulan balok sebanyak 6 kali, lututnya kanan kiri dipukul 3 kali, dan semua mata kakinya dipukul dua kali.

Mohammad menderita luka di bagian kepala yang mengharuskannya mendapat jahitan karena bocor.

"Saya tidak tahu berapa kali saya dipukul dan ditendang.

Komisi Dana Laskar Jihad Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah Korwil DIY

Figure IX: The *Maluku Hari Ini*: an effective tool to communicate Salafi messages.

Registered volunteers were obliged to undergo physical and mental training organized by the branches of FKAWJ, during which they were instilled with fervour for jihad. Under the instruction of *ustāzs* of the advisory body, they were required to read chapters discussing jihad in different classical Islamic books, particularly the *Bulūgh al-Marām* of Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (1372-1449) and *Zād al-Ma‘ād* of Muḥammad ibn Qayyīm al-Jawziyya (1292-1350). In this way, units of voluntary fighters whose membership ranged from between fifty to five hundred people were formed in every branch. In the Tawangmangu meeting in March 2000, these units of voluntary fighters made an agreement to unite themselves into Laskar Jihad.

Although Laskar Jihad had been established, the existence of FKAWJ remained crucial. As an umbrella organization for the former, it was responsible for organizing and financing the dispatch of all jihad fighters to the Moluccas. Through its social division, it was even required to provide financial support for the families of fighters left behind at home. To fulfil these tasks, FKAWJ needed a large amount of money. It claimed to have collected money by two systems of fundraising: (1) Self-support from organization members in the form of basic and incidental contributions; (2) donations from money collected in mosques, at intersections, and at traffic lights. FKAWJ emphasized that the bulk of its financial support was derived from these donations, whose list was proudly shown in the monthly *Salafy* and Laskar Jihad website. According to the

explanation of the chairman of the Financial Division of FKAWJ, more than 50 per cent of Laskar Jihad's operational budget came from such donations.[110]

Figure X: Stickers aimed at inciting Salafis to wage jihad in the Moluccas, stating that death is a certainty, it cannot be moved forward or back by jihad.

On the eve of dispatching Laskar Jihad fighters to the Moluccas in April 2000, in cities where FKAWJ branches were established, young men standing at intersections and holding boxes labeled 'Contribution for jihad in the Moluccas' became a common sight. In Yogyakarta alone, one could witness hundreds of members of what FKAWJ called the 'Pasukan Ngencleng', a Javanese expression meaning a task-force whose job is to collect money in the main streets. In this city FKAWJ rented a large house to provide temporary accommodation for the Pasukan Ngencleng, whose number multiplied on Friday when they stood before mosques waiting to profit from the generosity of people coming out of the Friday congregation.

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[110] Interviews with Ma'ruf Bahrun and Yustanto Dwiyantoro, Jakarta, 27 October 2001.

As far as I have been able to observe, however, FKAWJ did not in fact collect much money from the streets. The members of the Pasukan Ngencleng received only coins of small denomination or notes with a value ranging from Rp 100 to Rp 1,000 from one out of ever thousand people. If such public fundraising led to such modest amounts, where was the rest of the money coming from? FKAWJ did not deny having received a much larger amount of money from secret donors who did not want their names to be publicized. In this category, it is believed to have received a significant amount of money from a number of high-ranking military men like Wiranto, Djaja Suparman and Nugroho Jayusman.[111] Nor were such donations confined to the military. Fuad Bawazier, the former Minister of Finance associated with al-Irsyad and known to entertain fairly close ties with the Soeharto family, was mentioned as one of the most important civilian donors. Some well-known politicians were also said to have contributed a significant amount. Irrefutably, FKAWJ also received donations from affluent businessmen in Jakarta, Solo, Pekalongan, Tegal and Surabaya.

FKAWJ also did not deny having received financial support from Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Australia, the United States and the Gulf states.[112] FKAWJ activists claimed to have engaged in mobilizing financial support abroad by persuading important personalities in the transnational Salafi *da'wa* network.[113] Ja'far Umar Thalib himself frankly acknowledged that he had received Rp 700 million from foreign donors before the dispatch of his fighters to the Moluccas at the end of April 2000. He specifically mentioned Saudi Arabia and the Muslim Congress of New Jersey as the two most important sources in the success of initial Laskar Jihad operations.[114]

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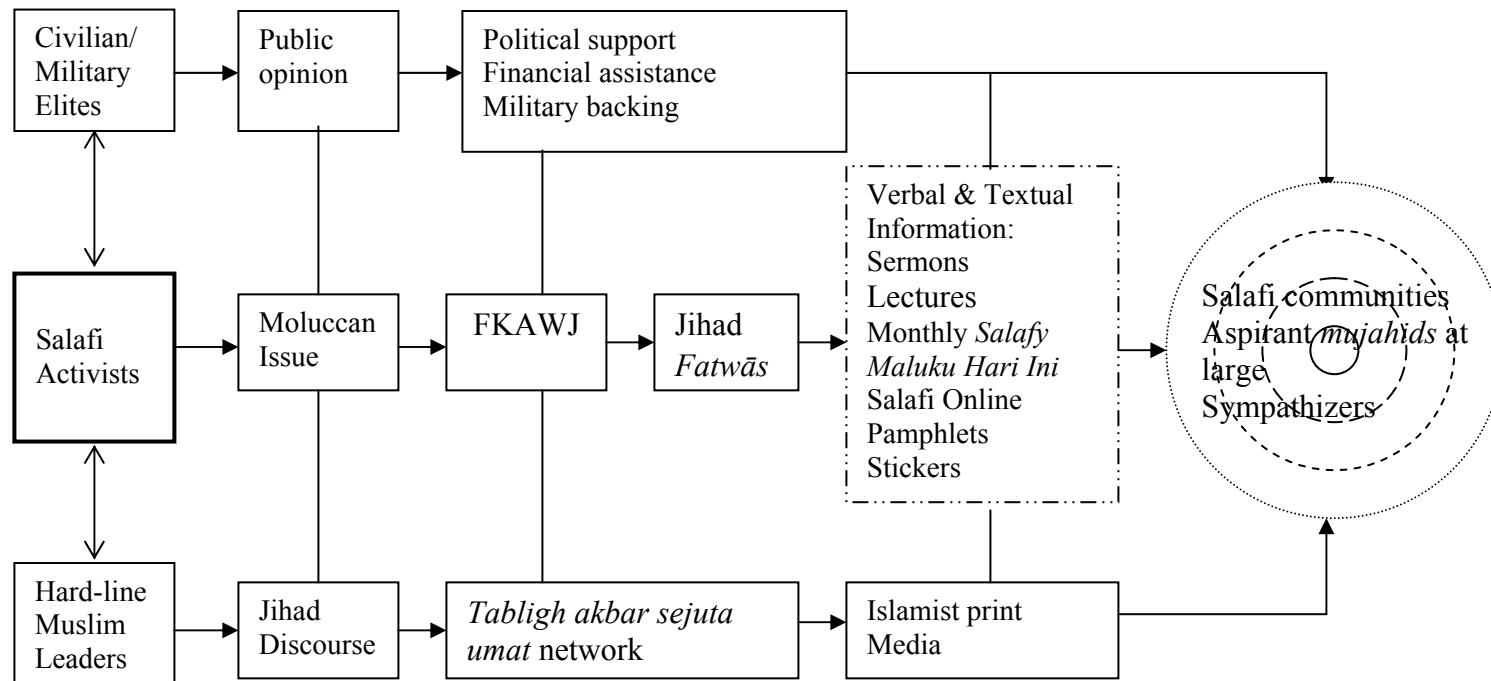
[111] Prasetyo (2002), p. 218.

[112] Interview with Hardiyanto, Jakarta, 9 December 2000.

[113] Interview with Idral Haris, Solo, 14 February 2003.

[114] Interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib, www.astaga.com, interview, 13 April 2000; Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Pemberontakan Kristen Ambon Masih Berlangsung', *Suara Hidayatullah*, interview, 8: 13 (December 2001), p. 15; 'Sumber Dana Kaum Bergamis', *Gamma* (19 May 2002).

Figure XI: Diagram of Jihad Mobilization

CHAPTER V
FROM APOLITICAL SALAFISM TO JIHADIST ACTIVISM

The decision and determination to fight jihad in the Moluccas has required the Indonesian Salafis to make some adjustments in their ideological discourse. Under the auspices of Laskar Jihad, they seemed no longer hesitant about emphasizing the necessity to fulfil the duty of jihad and discussing its magnificence for the struggle of the Muslim *umma.* They asserted that jihad is not only vital to save Islam from the aggression and intimidation of the West-cum-Zionist global conspiracy led by the United States but also essential if the lost glory of Islam is to be revived. In their view, jihad thus constitutes a single way to solve the problems afflicting Muslims today and to uphold the dignity of Islam. They underscored that to die in jihad is the highest form of sacrifice by faithful Muslims and will be rewarded with the highest place in heaven.

The jihad discourse that has developed among Laskar Jihad fighters exemplifies a successful amalgamation of doctrinaire-revivalist ideas and a militant jihad battle cry. This apparently cannot be isolated from the fact that, as we have discussed in the previous chapters, they constitute part of a larger 'apolitical' Salafi *da'wa* community. Their ideology is therefore irrevocably associated with the basic Salafi doctrinal positions that stress the need to return to pure Islam while emphasizing the supremacy of *sharī'a* and the Sunna. It is necessary in this chapter to pose the question of how this sort of ideology has been formed and developed and to what extent it has contributed to the determination of the Salafis to participate in jihad in the Moluccas.

By ideology, I mean a system of beliefs, ideas, values and meanings that reflects moral, social and political interests and commitments of a particular group and out of them creates an understanding of how the world should work.[1] Teun A. van Dijk (1998) argues that as a system of belief, ideology should be understood in terms of the 'triangle' of (social) cognition, society and discourse.

[1] There are abundant definitions of ideology, some of which connote a pejorative meaning. For a definition which is relatively neutral, see Sinisa Malesevick, 'Rehabilitating Ideology after Poststructuralism', in Ian MacKenzie and Sinisa Malesevick (eds.), *Ideology after Poststructuralism* (London: Pluto Press, 2002).

From his point of view ideology not only represents group identity and interests, but also defines group cohesion and organizes joint action and interactions that optimally realize group goals.[2] David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford (1992) highlight the dynamics of ideology in relation to the struggle of movement actors over the production of ideas and meanings. These scholars are of the opinion that ideology does not stand as a carrier of extant ideas and meanings that flow statically from the movement's underlying doctrines, but rather as an interactive process that involves the movement's actors.[3]

Some social theorists have cautioned scholars not to ignore the role ideology plays in collective action. An important contribution of William Gamson (1988) on ideological packages, for instance, has indicated how effective the role ideological symbols play in mobilizing opinion. He argues that ideology includes core elements that provide an underlying framework taken for granted to transcend specific issues and suggest larger world-views.[4] While recognizing the cultural and interpretative function of ideology, Kenneth Tucker (1989) likewise emphasizes its instrumental and political functions. He considers ideology as a cultural system of meanings that defines resources and opportunities, fosters political culture and promotes collective identity and solidarity.[5] Pamela E. Oliver and Hank Johnston (2000) have even noted that ideology is much more important than framing, because it is able to address the much deeper and complex meanings that framing is not. In other words, ideology captures the beliefs and ideas of actors the way framing does not.[6]

Back to the Qur'an and Sunna

The world-view of the Salafis is predicated upon the tradition of *tajdīd* and *iṣlaḥ*, usually translated as 'renewal' and 'reform', respectively. The underlying theme of this tradition represents the individual and communal effort to attempt to define Islam clearly and explicitly in terms of God's revelation (the Qur'an) and the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad.[7] In this tradition, the Salafis claim to have one primary concern: to urge a return to the Qur'an and the Sunna in accordance with the understanding and example set by the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*.[8] The necessity to

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[2] Teun A. van Dijk, *Ideology: a Multidisciplinary Approach* (London: Sage Publications, 1998), pp. 26-7.

[3] Snow and Benford (1992), p. 136.

[4] William A. Gamson, 'Political Discourse and Collective Action', in B. Klandermans, H. Kriesi and S. Tarrow (eds.), *From Structure to Action: Comparing Social Movements Across Cultures* (Connecticut: International Social Movement Research, 1988), pp. 219-46.

[5] Kenneth H. Tucker, 'Ideological and Social Movements: The Contribution of Habermas', *Sociological Inquiry* 59 (1989), pp. 30-48.

[6] Pamela E. Oliver, and Hank Johnston, 'What a Good Idea: Ideologies and Frames in Social Movement Research', *Mobilization* 5: 1,pp. 37-54.

[7] John O. Voll, 'Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: *Tajdid* and *Islah*', in John L. Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 32.

[8] 'Assalamu'alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh', *Salafy*, editorial notes, 1 (1995), p. 1.

call for a return to the Qur'an and the Sunna is emphasized since they believe that the Muslim *umma* had failed to avoid various forms of polytheism (*shirk*), reprehensible innovation (*bid'a*) and superstition (*khurafa*).[9] From their point of view, these deviations may have occurred because of Muslims' neglect of the true Islam as taught by the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ* and thought to be the purist form of Islam.[10]

The Salafis believe that the fragmentations, conflicts, political instability and economic turmoil that all afflict Muslim countries today stem from their failure to follow the example of the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*.[11] Commenting on the contemporary situation, Ja'far Umar Thalib has pointed out in his introductory notes for the publication of the periodical *Salafy*:

> 'The Muslim *umma* have constantly been faced with various troublesome challenges. Following the *Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm*, the straight path, in a consistent manner seems so intractable. Followers of the Sunna are dismissed by the government which has promoted the followers of the *bid'a* to be its collaborators. Moreover, the followers of the Sunna are treated as outcasts by the society: they are neglected, discredited, condemned. This is the biggest challenge facing the Muslim *umma* today'.[12]

Ja'far Umar Thalib is convinced that with a return to the absolute truth of Islam, elements and influences that have corrupted Muslim religious beliefs and practices will automatically be eradicated. This, in turn, will revive the original, pure and true Islam, a consummation deemed to be a prerequisite to regain the glory of Islam.[13]

In their call for a return to pristine, ideal Islam, the Salafis place a particular emphasis on the revival of the Sunna. The position of the Sunna in Islamic orthodoxy is indubitably central, not only as a medium to understand the Qur'an but also as an independent doctrinal source second to the Qur'an. The Salafis underline the vital position of the Sunna, pointing out that attachment to the Sunna means a commitment to the defence of the faith and to stand on the path of salvation, steering the Muslim *umma* away from deviations and corruptions.[14] An attempt to revive the Sunna is considered a crucial task in a situation in which the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad has been neglected.[15] The Salafis call themselves the followers of the Prophetic Traditions (*Ahl al-*

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[9] Salih ibn Ghanim al-Sadlan, 'Fiqhul Waqi': Penyakit dan Obatnya', *Salafy* 3 (1996), p. 18.
[10] Salim al-Hilali, 'Mengapa Harus Manhaj Salaf?' *Salafy* 1 (1995), p. 3.
[11] Abdul Mu'thi, 'Dakwah Salafiyah Menjawab Problematik Umat', *Salafy* 5 (1996), pp. 12-3.
[12] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Dakwah Salafiyah di Persimpangan Jalan', *Salafy* 1 (1995), p. 42.
[13] Ja`far Umar Thalib, 'Fitnah Sururiyah Memecah-belah Umat', *Salafy* 2 (1996), p.18.
[14] Muhammad Nasr al-Din al-Albani, 'Kedudukan As-Sunnah dalam Islam', *Salafy* 13 (1997), pp. 20-6.
[15] Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, 'Membela Sunah Nabawiyyah', *Salafy* 13 (1997), pp. 27-36.

Ḥadīth), defined as those who consistently rely on the authentic *ḥadīths* and practice them in their everyday lives. On the basis of their commitment to internalize the authentic *ḥadīths*, they claim to have belonged to the so-called saved sect (*firqa nājiya*) or the assisted group (*tā'ifa manṣūra*).[16]

In the conception of the Salafis, the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ* were comprised exclusively of the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (*Ṣaḥāba*) (the first generation of Muslims), their followers (*Tābi'īn*) (the second generation of Muslims) and those who came directly after the *Tābi'īn (Tābi' al-Tābi'īn)*. These people are thought to provide the best model for the Islamic way of life because their understanding and interpretation of the Qur'an and the Sunna are believed to have been acquired under the direct guidance of the Prophet Muhammad. In the eyes of the Salafis, to follow the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ* means to submit to the absolute truth as set out in the Qur'an and the Sunna, and that this will lead a person to steer clear of mistakes and protect him or her from sins and evil acts.[17]

The degree of loyalty shown in following the Qur'an and Sunna in accordance to the understanding and the example of the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ* will define whether a person can be called a Muslim or not, the Salafis claim. Accordingly, a Muslim has no option but to become a Salafi, meaning one who follows the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*. They are convinced that a Salafi is attached to a group that has been guaranteed success, victory and salvation, because it has kept aloof from any element that has deviated from the original, true Islam. This is what they refer to as either 'the method of the pious ancestors' (*Manhāj Salafī*) or 'the method of the followers of the Prophet's Traditions' (*Manhāj Ahl al-Ḥadīth/Sunna*).[18]

For the sake of the glory of Islam, the Salafis insist on the necessity for *da'wa,* in the sense that Muslims should be made aware of various corruptions that may have clouded their religious beliefs and practices. Ja'far Umar Thalib has explicitly stated four main aims of the Salafi *da'wa*, which include:

1. To teach human beings in general and Muslims in particular about true Islam, by referring to the comprehensive principles of belief, in order to answer all problems facing the *umma*;
2. To purify various corruptions marring Muslim beliefs and practices as the outcome of the infiltration of the elements of reprehensible innovations (*bid'a*) and infidelity (*kufr*), by debating such beliefs and practices and explaining their fallacy;

[16] Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, 'Mengenal Para Imam Ahlussunnah, Ashabul Hadits', *Salafy* 4 (1996), pp. 10-4.

[17] Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, 'Mengapa Kita Harus Memakai Nama Salafi?' *Salafy* 1 (1995), pp. 8-10.

[18] Al-Hilali (1995), 3. See also al-Albani (1995), pp. 8-10.

3. To revive the practices of the Prophet Muhammad, which had been neglected by the *umma*, and to strengthen practices prevailing in the *umma* in accordance with the Prophet's guidance;
4. To disseminate the message of solidarity and unity of the *umma* on the basis of its loyalty to the Prophet Muhammad, called *al-walā'*, and hostility towards heresy and infidelity, known as *al-barā'*.[19]

The Salafis claim that their *da'wa* is distinctly different from the *da'wa* of other Islamic movements as it is built upon three main principles: (1) to establish the prominence of the Sunna of the Prophet; (2) to provide a direct example for society; and (3) to advocate the purity of *tawḥīd*. Some prolific writers among the Indonesian Salafis, including Abdul Mu'thi and Muhammad Musa Nasr, stigmatize other *da'wa* groups that they claim have not based their activities on these principles as dangerous groups trapped in Satanic *da'wa*. They deplore the existence of the groups they accuse of being preoccupied with political and other non-fundamental issues. They insist that giving priority to politics, while neglecting the necessity to strive for the Sunna and eliminate all forms of *bid'a,* is a mistake.[20] Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, another prominent ideologue of the Indonesian Salafis, adds that the neglect of the Sunna has resulted in fragmentations and enduring conflicts among Muslims.[21]

Tawḥīd

The very core of the Salafis' doctrine is *tawḥīd*, meaning to accept and believe in the oneness of God and His absolute authority. In their conception, *tawḥīd* is divided into three branches: *tawḥīd 'ubudiyya* (unity of worship); *tawḥīd rubūbiyya* (unity of lordship); and *asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt* (unity of Allah's names and attributes). The *tawḥīd 'ubudiyya* means that a true servant of Allah must single out Allah in all acts of worship and He alone should be worshiped with complete and utter loyalty. The *tawḥīd rububiyya* implies that a faithful Muslim must accept that Allah is the Creator of all things and sovereignty over them belongs only to Him. The *tawḥīd asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt* means that a faithful Muslim believes in Allah's names and attributes mentioned in the Qur'an and the authentic Sunna, in accordance to their literal Arabic meanings, without any denial of these attributes or likening them to the attributes of His creation.[22]

The Salafis maintain that these three branches of *tawḥīd* are inseparable from one another because they are the pillars of a Muslim's creed (*shahāda*) of *'Lā ilāha illa Allāh'*, in the sense that to declare *'Lā ilāha illa Allāh'* entails a

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[19] Thalib, (1995), p. 39.

[20] See Abdul Mu`thi, 'Dakwah Salafiyah Dakwah yang Haq', *Salafy* 3 (1996), pp. 10-5; and Muhammad Musa Nasr, 'Fitnahnya Dakwah Syaitan', *Salafy* 3 (1996), pp. 20-3.

[21] As-Sewed (1997), pp. 20-6.

[22] Thalib (1995), p. 39. See also Zainul Arifin An-Nawawi, 'Pembagian Tauhid Menurut Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah', *Salafy* 13 (1997), pp. 37-41.

total submission to God. Given this testimony, they are convinced that in all aspects of life a faithful Muslim has no option but to submit to God. Subsequently, the essence of *tawḥīd* is a total submission to God proved by a sincere determination to implement all of His commands and scrupulously avoid all of His prohibitions. Ahmad Hamdani, another Indonesian Salafi writer, has pointed out that 'To declare "*Lā ilāha illa Allāh*" is not a guarantee that will bring a Muslim to heaven and this declaration is useless without a knowledge, understanding, conviction, and implementation of all of its meanings in real life'.[23] Submission to God, therefore, is not a personal or public act but the focal point that engulfs members of Muslim society in all aspects of their lives. Consequently, the distinction between the personal and the public is replaced by the distinction between the religious and the non-religious.

In order to maintain the purity of Muslim beliefs and practices, the Salafis strongly condemn whatever they regard as deviation from the principles of *tawḥīd*. One such example is that they reject *taqlīd*, saying that it implies a submission to something other than God. In this relation, they are in total opposition to the *madhhab,* suggesting that the opinions of the *madhhab* are deficient in Qur'anic and Sunna references, and those who follow them are not faithful Muslims. They likewise reject *ijmā'*, consensus, and *qiyās,* analogy, claiming that all religious matters must be resolved in the light of *aḥādith*. Interestingly, they are also not in favour of *ijtihād*, independent legal reasoning, as advocated by Muslim reformists. From their point of view, *ijtihād* involves reason, which should play no role in religious matters. Within this context, Ja'far Umar Thalib criticizes Muḥammad 'Abduh and even Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, the pioneers of Islamic modernism. He deems these two prominent thinkers to have been contaminated by innovations propounded by the Mu'tazilites, a rationalist sect of Islam, (*bid'a Mu'tazila*), eclipsing the importance of the Sunna.[24]

If we look at the discourse of prominent Islamist ideologues, we will find some similarities in the way they look at *tawḥīd*. Abul A'la al-Mawdudi, for instance, saw *tawḥīd* as the sole objective of the faith in the sense that Islam is revealed to teach human beings total obedience and submission to God. A faithful Muslim, Mawdudi argued, is not someone who simply abides by the teachings of Islam, but someone who accepts obedience and submission to God in a total manner. From his point of view, active submission to God by individual Muslims is a pledge of their good faith to implement the teachings of Islam comprehensively in all aspects of life, and this constitutes a prerequisite for the establishment of the ideal Islamic order.[25]

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[23] Ahmad Hamdani, 'Hakekat Tauhid', *Salafy* 20 (1997), pp. 35-40

[24] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Perkembangan Pemikiran Sayyid Muhammad Rasyid Ridlo', *Salafy* 31 (1999), pp. 42-8.

[25] Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 57-8.

Like Mawdudi, Sayyid Quṭb made *tawḥīd* the basic fact and component of Islamic creed. For him, total submission to God is the actual meaning of Islam. Having accepted this principle, Quṭb negated any rule and system composed by human beings, and simultaneously, asserted the comprehensiveness of Islam. In this light it is not surprising that Quṭb classified those individuals who regulate their life and behaviour in accordance with the divine creed as the followers of the divine religion. But those individuals who derive their system of government from a king, a prince, a tribe or a people constitute followers of the man-made religion.[26] He assured his followers that God is the only ruler, the only legislator, and the only organizer of human life and relationships. Hence, all guidance and legislation, all systems of life, norms governing relationships and the measures of values are derived from Him alone.[27]

The central position of *tawḥīd* is an equally valid concept among Shi'ites. Ali Shariati, one of the most influential Shi'ite thinkers, viewed *tawḥīd* as the principle that guarantees justice on the surface of the earth; a total submission to God implied by the doctrine of *tawḥīd* necessitates a removal of oppression by the oppressor upon the oppressed. The mission and objective of *tawḥīd*, he claimed, were solely to reinstate freedom, equality and classlessness through the destruction of the trials of wealth, political power and religion.[28] Shariati was even convinced that *tawḥīd* provides the foundation of the creation of harmony in human life:

> 'The very structure of *tawḥīd* cannot accept contradiction or disharmony in the world…Contradiction between nature and meta-nature…science and religion, metaphysics and nature, working for men and working for God, politics and religion…all these forms of contradiction are reconcilable only with the worldview of *shirk*—dualism, trinitarianism or polytheism—but not with *tawḥīd*—monotheism'.[29]

The most important aspect that should be stressed here is that while emphasizing the importance of *tawḥīd* as the pillar of Islam, the Salafis seek to eliminate its political meaning. Their discussions on this subject focus mainly on the division of *tawḥīd* into *tawḥīd 'uluhiyya*, *tawḥīd rubūbiyya* and *tawḥīd asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt* in reference to classical debates of Muslim philosophers on God. They are convinced that to believe in these three branches of *tawḥīd* means

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[26] Ahmad S. Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutb* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1992), pp. 70-3.

[27] Yvonne Y. Haddad, 'Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival', in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 77.

[28] See Ali Rahnema, *An Islamic Utopian: A Political Biography of Ali Shari'ati* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), p. 290.

[29] Ali Shariati, *On the Sociology of Islam*, trans. Hamid Algar (Berkeley: Mizan Press, 1979), p. 86.

to be free from polytheistic and corrupting innovative elements, and this would totally guarantee the faith of a Muslim, on the basis of which a truly Islamic life can be built.

Ahl al-Sunna wa'l-Jamā'a

The Salafis maintain that the method by which they understand Islam is identical to the method of the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a,* interpreted as followers of the Sunna of the Prophet and the first generation of Muslims (*Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*) and all the communities who attach themselves to them. They emphasize that to be considered followers of the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a* a Muslim should consistently follow all the instructions prescribed by the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions and join a community that practises his Sunna consistently. From their point of view, the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a* is the only saved group. A Muslim has no choice but to associate with that group. As a basis, they refer to a tradition of the Prophet stating that after his own age had passed Muslims would split into seventy-three groups, all of which would go to hell except one, the group that had consistently observed the Sunna of the Prophet and the Community of his followers. [30]

In his discussion about the necessity to follow the Prophet and the Community of his followers, Ja'far Umar Thalib argues that the term *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a* appears to be a symbol of the persistence of the *ahl al-ḥadīth* in defending the Qur'an and Sunna from the infiltration of the *ahl al-bid'a,* who were active in implanting philosophical thoughts into Islam some hundreds of years after the time of the Prophet, which resulted in the marginalization of the Sunna.[31] In fact, the term of *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a* was born in the early formative period of Islam in the context of political tensions occurring at that time. It was explored in even more depth by the so-called *Ahl al-Ḥadīth,* those who sought direct references in the text of the Qur'an and Sunna on matters of religion, in the face of the challenge posed by the *Ahl al-Ra'y*, those who tended to rely on intellectual speculations. The former were known as *al-salaf* (predecessors) and the latter as *al-khalaf* (successors).[32]

In scholarly debates the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a* is also called Sunni Islam, Islam of the Sunna, which constitutes the orthodox school of this religion. In light of their rigid adherence to the interpretation of Islam by the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ* considered to be the true defenders of the Islamic faith, the followers of Sunni Islam are also thought of as traditionalists. They themselves claimed the adherents of the correct or standard prophetic practices to be distinguished from

[30] Concerning the Salafis' definition of the a*hl al-Sunna wa'l-jama'a*, see Abdul Mu'thi As-Salafy, 'Memerangi Dakwah Hizbiyyah', *Salafy* 9 (1996), pp. 12-4.

[31] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Mengenal Sejarah dan Pemahaman Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah', *Salafy* 1 (1995), pp. 14-7.

[32] See Benyamin Abrahamov, *Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. 2.

other Islamic sects whose views are deemed to be rife with *bid'a*. Therefore, the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a* is also frequently defined as 'those who refrain from deviating from orthodox dogma and practice', and it is an expression generally used in opposition to Shi'ite Islam.[33]

The Salafis argue that the term *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a* has been only vaguely understood by Muslims and that consequently the proponents of *bid'a* have been making use of it to legalize their teachings. This manipulation is suspected of having kept Muslims away from true Islam. The Salafis consider themselves the only group that deserves to have the right to use the term *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a*. They claim that other groups only make use of this term without any firm commitment to consistently follow the principle of the oneness of God, the main pillar of the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a*. In this regard, the Salafis reject any compromise with any other religious groups that allegedly have not adopted the path of the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ* in understanding the Qur'an and Sunna.

The Salafis' claim to be the only group attached to the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a* has added a dimension to the long debate surrounding this term and engaged in by almost all mainstream Islamic organizations in Indonesia. The Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), as the representative of Indonesian traditionalist Muslims, explicitly declares itself to be composed of the followers of the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a*, as it is stated in its foundation constitution. However, closer examination of its position shows that this organization interprets the term as dedicated followers of one of the four established legal schools of Islam: the Hanafites; the Malikites; the Shafi'ites; and the Hanbalites, in religious practices, and of the Ash'arites and the Maturidites, two theological schools combining both rational and textual approach, in belief.[34] In its general discourse the modernist rival of the Nahdlatul Ulama, the Muhammadiyah, also claims itself to be the follower of the Sunna and the Community of the Prophet, although such a claim has never been made explicitly. For example, in one of the decisions of its *fatwā* commission (*majlis tarjīh*), there is a statement that 'decisions on the principles of belief are to be based on the precepts of the *ahl al-ḥaqq wa al-sunna'*.[35]

Tension between these movements is a direct consequence of their respective claims to the right to use the term *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a*. The

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[33] A.J. Wensinck, 'Sunna', *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, IX: 878a, CD-ROM Edition v. 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

[34] On detailed discussion on the concept of *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jama`a* among the Nadhdatul Ulama, see Choirul Anam, *Pertumbuhan dan Perkembangan NU* (Solo: Jatayu, 1985), M. Ali Haidar, *Nahdatul Ulama dan Islam di Indonesia: Pendekatan Fikih dalam Politik* (Jakarta: Gramedia, 1994); and Michael Laffan, 'The *Fatwā* Debated? Shūra in one Indonesian Context', *Islamic Law and Society*, 12: 1, Theme Issue edited by N.J.G. Kaptein and Michael Laffan (2005), pp. 93-121.

[35] See Fauzan Saleh, *Modern Trends in Islamic Theological Discourse in 20th Century Indonesia, A Critical Survey* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 68.

Nahdlatul Ulama has accused the Muhammadiyah of being beyond the bounds of the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a* because of its neglect of the doctrines propounded by the *madhhab*. Some Muhammadiyah scholars have sought to defend their organization from such an accusation and have implicitly rejected the claim made by the Nahdlatul Ulama, explaining that adherence to the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a* is defined by a determination 'to follow their principle of belief and practice and to struggle for the glory of Islam and the Muslim *umma*'.[36] The rejection of the claim by the Nahdlatul Ulama has also been voiced by another modernist Muslim organization, Persis. According to Moenawar Chalil, one of the main proponents of this organization, the concept of *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a* does not ineluctably mean to follow the Shafi'ites in religious practices and the Ash'arites in belief, but instead to follow the Qur'an and the Sunna consistently.[37]

The Salafis insist that, in spite of claims to be the adherents of *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a*, the aforementioned mainstream Islamic organizations have allowed polytheistic and heretical elements to corrupt the beliefs and religious practices of their members.[38] They criticize the organizations for using the term only as a decoration without making a proper determined attempt to implement all of its principles. The Nahdlatul Ulama, for instance, is blamed for having been indifferent to various putatively deviant traditions commonly practised by its members, such as visiting tombs, conducting *taḥlīl* (praying for the deceased), and blindly imitating their religious authorities. From the perspective of the Salafis, the Nahdlatul Ulama has totally neglected the example of the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*. The same criticism has been addressed to the Muhammadiyah. This organization is thought to have put too much emphasis on reason, to the extent that the Qur'an and the Sunna have been neglected. The Salafis assert that Islam is not a religion of reason, but rather of what the Qur'an and Sunna prescribe.

Al-Walā' wa'l-Barā'

The Salafis believe in the doctrine of *al-walā' wa'l-barā',* which is conceived to be one of the pillars of the Salafi *da'wa* movement. In various places Ja'far Umar Thalib has asserted the importance of this doctrine, which he interprets as that of 'alliance and dissociation'. Basically *al-walā'* means 'to love, support, help, follow, defend', and *al-barā'* means 'to despise, desert, denounce'.[39] Looking at this basic meaning, he argues that *al-walā' wa'l-barā'* implies that any Muslim who claims to have faith in Allah must love, help and defend Islam

[36] Ibid. p. 77.
[37] Moenawar Chalil, *Kembali Kepada Al Quran dan As-Sunnah: Suatu Muqaddimah bagi Himpunan Hadis-hadis Pilihan* (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1991), p. 386.
[38] Abdul Mu'thi, 'Prinsip Imam Ahlussunnah dalam Al-Inshaf', *Salafy* 4 (1996), pp. 15-8.
[39] The discussion about the meaning of this term can be found in various Salafi websites. See, for instance, www.salafi.net, www.salafitalk.net, www.salafiduroos.net, and www.islamworld.net.

and other Muslims. While striving to do this, they must denounce and maintain immunity from infidelity and infidels.[40] Theoretically, this doctrine entails a clear-cut distinction between the world of believers and that of unbelievers. Migration from a non-Muslim land to a Muslim land to safeguard personal religious belief and the perseverance not to imitate a non-Muslim way of life are considered forms of obedience to this doctrine.

The doctrine of *al-walā' wa'l-barā'* has provided the basis for the Salafis' choice to live in a small tight-knit community (*jamā'a*). They are convinced that the community system will protect them from *bid'a* and reinforce their unity in the face of Muslim enemies. Quoting 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Abd Allāh ibn Bāz, Ja'far Umar Thalib has even stated:

> 'When Muslims are united and thereby become aware of the dangers the enemies of Islam pose to them and their beliefs, they will be rigorous and persevering in defending the Muslim *umma* and protecting Islam. Our enemies have never expected that this sort of unity would materialize. They are always keen on trying to fragment Muslims by spreading hatred and hostility among us'.[41]

Nevertheless, the Salafis assert that their community system is different from the system advocated by Quṭb, who required committed individuals to form vital organic cells committed to the materialization of the true Islamic society; these organic cells should form an independent entity separate from the one in which they live.[42] Quṭb's promotion of the necessity of the *jamā'a* system is related to his *jāhiliyya* doctrine, which considers the present world order to be the world of pagan ignorance because it is governed by man-made rule and systems, disregarding what God has prescribed.[43] Accordingly, Quṭb divided the world into two spheres: *dār al-Islām* (the Abode of Islam) and *dār-al-ḥarb* (the Land of War). Because the present world order is predominantly perceived to belong to the *dār al-ḥarb*, Muslims are required to undertake *hijra* (migration) until the restoration of the divine order is implemented.[44] It is worth noting that the concept of *hijra* often plays an influential role in shaping the ideological formation of an Islamist movement. It is a programme of action that gives

[40] Thalib (1996), pp. 16-7.

[41] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Memahami Hukum Jama'ah, Imamah dan Bai'ah', *Salafy* 12 (1996b), pp. 8-17.

[42] Yvonne Y. Haddad, 'Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival', in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 87.

[43] Yvonne Y. Haddad, 'The Quranic Justification for an Islamic Revolution: The View of Sayyid Qutb', *The Middle East Journa*l 37, no. 1 (1983), pp. 14-29.

[44] Youssef Choueiri, 'The Political Discourse of Contemporary Islamist Movements', in Abdel Salam Sidahmed and Anoushiravan Ehteshami, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1996), pp.19-33.

witness to the totality of the sovereignty of God, by the creation of a way of life that differs from the Western model.[45]

The Salafis emphasize that the roots of their concern with the community system lies more in a willingness to withdraw from corrupting innovations and to live in accordance with the example of the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*, rather than in a revolutionary dream to create a totally Islamic society, as suggested by Quṭb. In this regard, Muhammad Umar as-Sewed strongly criticizes Quṭb and asserts the dissimilarity of the meaning of community between the Ikhwān al-Muslimīn and the Salafis. He is convinced that the community system of the former has simply generated fanaticism, which has subsequently brought about fragmentation among Muslims. Similar criticism is levied at Tablighi Jama'at, which in spite of its enthusiasm of the *jamā'a* system is considered ignorant of the principle of *al-walā' wa'l-barā'* because of its inclination to sufism.[46]

In light of what has just been said it stands to reason that the Salafis acknowledge no *bay'a*, the doctrine of oath of allegiance that requires all members of a movement to take a vow of loyalty to their leader (*'amīr* or *imām*). This doctrine has been applied by most radical Islamist movements to assure the loyalty of their followers. In the eyes of Ja'far Umar Thalib, *bay'a* might entail a serious deviation from the principle of *al-walā' wa'l-barā'* because he believes that *bay'a* necessitates a declaration of unconditional loyalty to a *jamā'a* leader under all circumstances, even if the leader commits sinful acts.[47] The negation of *bay'a* significantly distinguishes the Salafis from the members of, for instance, the NII movement. In this movement a loyalty to a particular *'amīr* is fundamental and the *bay'a* functions to bind the members' loyalties to the *'amīr*.

In their endeavours to abide by the doctrine of *al-walā' wa'l-barā'*, the Salafis are committed to following specific codes of conduct and dress. Generally speaking they prefer to adopt traditional clothing—a long white shirt, baggy trousers gathered above the ankle, and headgear—and allow their beards to grow long.[48] Female members wear long fairly shapeless black dresses and cover their faces with veils. They were secluded from the men and were only allowed to have contact with males in the presence of their husbands or of *maḥrims*, their close relatives with whom they are not allowed to marry. In short,

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[45] See Gerad Auda, 'The Normalization of the Islamic Movement in Egypt from the 1970s to the Early 1990s', in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds.), *Accounting for Fundamentalism: The Dynamic Character of Movements* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 367-377.

[46] Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, 'Bahaya Pemikiran Takfir Sayyid Qutb', *Salafy* 16 (1997), p. 27.

[47] Thalib (1996b), pp. 8-17.

[48] Cutting the beard is considered wicked, since such an act brings Muslims into invidious comparison with infidels. See Abu Nu`aim M. Faisal Jamil al-Madani, 'Jenggot dalam Pandangan Islam', *Salafy* 7 (1996), pp. 35-7.

their social interactions were highly restricted.[49] These all are believed to be an effective way to avoid any resemblance to infidels. For the same reason, they also reject all entertaining distractions: music, theatre and places of pleasure and entertainment, such as cafés, discotheques and dance clubs.[50] Perfume, the cinema, television and photographs are considered part of infidel cultures.[51]

The doctrine of *al-walā' wa'l-barā'* developed by the Salafis is reminiscent of the thoughts expressed by Aḥmad ibn Taymiyya, a medieval thinker who witnessed the invasion by the Mongol troops on Damascus. He developed the idea that the dissimilarity between believers and unbelievers must be total. In his book entitled *Iqtidā' al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm*, he explained in detail all aspects of differences that should be drawn by Muslims in their encounters with non-Muslims. According to him, Muslims, for instance, should speak Arabic in preference to any other language and should cut their hair and leave beards to grow long in a manner different from that of Jews and Christians. The followers of these two religions (*Ahl al-Kitāb*) were seen by Ibn Taymiyya as active agents of unbelief who posed a threat to Islam.[52]

Ḥizbiyya

The Salafis are convinced that a faithful Muslim who follows the principles of the *al-walā' wa'l-barā'* would refrain from any involvement in partisan politics (*ḥizbiyya*).[53] They strongly reject what they call *da'wa ḥizbiyya*, meaning Islamic movements that are perceived to give priority to politics over the purification of the individual Muslim's religious beliefs and practices. Abdul Mu'thi, the prolific Indonesian Salafi writer, defines the *da'wa ḥizbiyya* as 'the political calls for fanaticism to a particular group which does not throw its whole weight behind the Salafi *manhāj*'.[54] He argues that the *da'wa ḥizbiyya* is in opposition to the *da'wa salafiyya* for the following reasons: (1) it deviates from *sabīl al-mu'minīn* (the way of faithful Muslims); (2) its leader comes perilously

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[49] See Abu Zaki Fathur Rahman, 'Hukum Berjabat Tangan dengan Wanita Bukan Mahram' and 'Hukum Keluarnya Seorang Wanita Memakai Minyak Wangi', *Salafy* 4 (1996), pp. 6-7. These articles compile some *fatwa*s of the grand *mufti* of Saudi Arabia, Abd al-Aziz ibn Baz, on the issue of handshake with women and of women using perfume. Both are not allowed for having entailed disobedience.

[50] Music and movie, for instance, were considered heretics that should be avoided. See 'Jebakan-jebakan Iblis', *Salafy* 24 (1998), p. 24.

[51] On their rejections on those things, see the *fatwa*s of the Ahlu Sunnah published in *Salafy.*

[52] Thomas F. Michel, S.J., *A Muslim Theologian's Response to Christianity: Ibn Taymiyya's Al-Jawab al-Salih* (New York: Caravan Book, 1984), pp. 84-5.

[53] Roel Meijer (1997) makes a clear distinction between *al-da'wa* and *al-ḥizbiyya*, which he refers to as two different currents in Islamic movements in contemporary Middle East. The difference of these two currents lies in the issue of whether involvement in politics is allowed. See Roel Meijer, *From Al-Da'wa to Al-Hizbiyya, Mainstream Islamic Movements in Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine in the 1990s* (Amsterdam: Research for International Political Economy and Foreign Policy Analysis, 1997).

[54] Abdul Mu'thi, 'Memerangi Dakwah Hizbiyyah', *Salafy* 9 (1996b), p. 16.

close to the sins of *bid'a*; (3) its members are committed to the doctrine of *al-walā' wa'l-barā'* on the basis of their loyalty to a particular leader rather than to the Qur'an and Sunna; and (4) it teaches fanaticism.[55] Here he attempts to emphasize the distinctiveness of the *da'wa salafiyya* as the only legitimate Islamic *da'wa* based on the Qur'an and Sunna, and in doing so, to negate all *da'wa* activities carried out by other Islamic groups.

The Salafis argue that the main error committed by the *ḥizbiyya* groups lies in their loyalty to the followers of *bid'a*. This mistake is believed to have caused fragmentation among Muslims, because it teaches fanaticism to each separate group, prompting members to negate any truths that might belong to the others. In other words, they are trapped into a funnel of narrow thoughts, focusing only on attempts to seize political power. The Salafis consider that the spirit of *ḥizbiyya* as defined by Quṭb is tantamount to being none other than that of the *jāhiliyya*.[56] From Ja'far Umar Thalib's point of view, the *da'wa ḥizbiyya* is one of the distinctive characteristics of polytheists, *mushrikīn*. This is because those who support the *da'wa ḥizbiyya* use Islam as a weapon to create fanatical groups for their own political interests and the result is that Muslims become fragmented and weak.[57]

One of the most important groups often mentioned by the Salafis in this respect is Ikhwān al-Muslimīn, accused of being trapped into the sins of *bid'a* because of its ambition to unite the Muslim *umma*. They are convinced that Ikhwān al-Muslimīn has a tendency to direct the loyalty of its followers unreservedly to certain leaders at the expense of the Quran, the Sunna and the example of the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*. In order to legitimize their position, the Salafis quote a number of *fatwās* from 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Abd Allāh bin Bāz, Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī, Muḥammad bin Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn and Ṣāliḥ Fauzān al-Fauzān prohibiting Salafis to show any sympathy for Ikhwān al-Muslimīn and similar Islamist movements.[58]

Ja'far Umar Thalib condemns Muslims sympathetic to the thoughts propagated by the ideologues of Ikhwān al-Muslimīn and other similar groups as '*Kaum Pengacau Agama*' (Agitators of Religion). He argues that these people seek to realize their goals by exalting their own ideologues to the extent of positioning them as idols. To him, this strategy has led the Muslim *umma* astray of the advice of the prominent *'ulamā'* of *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a*, particularly the members of the Committee of Senior *'Ulamā'* of Saudi Arabia, the Ahl al-Ḥadīth of Pakistan and the Mu'tamar Ahl al-Ḥadīth of Yemen.[59]

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[55] Ibid., pp. 16-9.

[56] Ibnu Syarif al-Bengkului as-Salafy al-Atsary, 'Semangat Hizbiyyah, Semangat Jahiliyyah', *Salafy* 9 (1996), pp. 51-4.

[57] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Akhlaqul Muwahhidin dan Akhlaqul Musyrikin', *Salafy* 16 (1997), p.12.

[58] 'Fatwa-Fatwa Ulama tentang Larangan Membentuk Jama'ah-Jama'ah Hizbiyyah', *Salafy* 9 (1996), pp. 24-8.

[59] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Perjalanan dari Luar Negeri', *Salafy* 5 (1996c), pp. 62-3.

Another goal pursued by Ikhwān al-Muslimīn is the reviving of the Islamic caliphate. This, according to the Salafis, is political in nature and dangerous to the purity of Islamic *da'wa*. Ja'far Umar Thalib maintains that a struggle to establish an Islamic caliphate would concentrate all Muslim minds and energies on political interests, and this would potentially cause bloody conflicts among Muslims themselves. He reiterates that Muslims should be consistent with their core agenda to maintain the purity of Muslim religious beliefs and practices and to wage war against all forms of polytheism, innovations and deviations, while reviving the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad. The Islamic caliphate is believed to be the promise given by God to those who struggle for the oneness of God and the glory of the Sunna.[60] Abdul Mu'thi emphasizes that the concern with the establishment of the Islamic caliphate, in which *ḥudūd* (penalties) such as the *rajm* sentence and amputation can be imposed on those who commit particular crimes, could cause Muslims to deviate from the *da'wa* of Allah's messengers concerned solely with the struggle for *tawḥīd*.[61]

The Salafis hold that the ambition to establish an Islamic caliphate has encouraged Ikhwān al-Muslimīn to support the Iranian Revolution without paying heed to 'all the forms of infidelity of this revolution and the hostility of its proponents to the principle of the *ahl al-sunna wa'l-jamā'a'*. They emphasize that the sympathy shown by Ikhwān al-Muslimīn members for the Iranian Revolution even led them to advocate a unification between Sunni and Shi'ite Islam. This is considered an absolute mistake, because, to the Salafis, Shi'ites have deviated concretely from true Islam, the *ahl al-sunnah wa'l-jamā'a,* and emerged to be the enemies of Islam. Ja'far Umar Thalib unequivocally demonstrates his hostility to Ayatollah Khomeini, whose government is considered to be infidel.[62]

One devastating impact of the *ḥizbiyya* movements highlighted by the Salafis is the spread of a revolutionary spirit among Muslims. Ja'far Umar Thalib points to the rebellion launched by the Jihad group in Egypt that perpetrated the assassination of Anwar Saddat, the Juhaymān al-'Utaybī-led attacks on the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Muḥammad ibn Surūr al-Nayef Zayn al-'Ābidīn and 'Abd al-Raḥmān 'Abd al-Khāliq's criticism of the Saudi Arabian royal family and its religious establishment, and the victory of FIS in Algeria, as examples of catastrophes afflicting the Muslim world in the wake of the spread of the *ḥizbiyya* spirit. He concludes that any attempt to take over power would produce nothing but failure, which, contrary to what was hoped for, would cause bloodshed among Muslims themselves.[63]

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[60] Thalib (1996), pp. 15-8.
[61] Mu`thi (1996), p. 13.
[62] Thalib (1996c), pp. 62-3.
[63] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Ratap Tangis di Aljazair: Sebuah Perjuangan yang Ternoda', *Salafy* 9 (1996), pp. 65-6.

Congruent with its non-revolutionary approach, the Salafis have developed a moderate stance towards existing rulers. They maintain that Muslims must obey their legitimate rulers, whether just or unjust, on the condition that they are not commanded to commit any sin. They do not see any chance to resist legitimate rulers committing errors and acting cruelly, except to advise them to return to the right way:

> 'The followers of the Sunna do not permit Muslims to disavow their loyalty to their legitimate rulers, let alone to resist them, even though they may be despotic and oppressive. The *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ* categorized the resistance against legitimate rulers as a reprehensible innovation'.[64]

The Salafis refer to some contemporary Wahhabi *'ulamā'* in defending such a doctrinal position, including 'Abd al-'Azīz 'Abd Allāh ibn Bāz and Ṣāliḥ ibn Fauzān al-Fauzān. These two prominent authorities among the Salafis maintain that criticizing a legitimate ruler might bring about anarchism and such an act is an absolute deviation from the Salafi *manhāj* (method).[65] Their paragon for this non-revolutionary attitude is again Ibn Taymiyya, who lived under a despotic ruler. Interestingly, even though repeatedly arrested and finally dying in jail, he forbade Muslims to take action against their legitimate ruler because it might result repercussions more harmful to Muslims than the despotism of the ruler.[66]

Ḥākimiyya (Sovereignty)

Although the ideology of the Salafis seems non-revolutionary, we will come across some of its ambivalences in dealing with certain issues, such as that of *ḥākimiyya*. It is a key concept developed by the twentieth-century main Islamist ideologues, including Quṭb and Mawdudi, who teach that in Islam governance belongs only to God, referring to, among other sources, the Qur'anic verse that reads, 'Those who do not rule in accordance with what God has revealed are unbelievers' (V: 47). In his discussion about this concept, Quṭb, for instance, insisted on God's absolute sovereignty, implying that the only ruler is God, the only true *sharī'a* is God's and likewise the only authority is God's.[67] In developing this concept Quṭb was in fact inspired by Mawdudi, saying that true sovereignty can be ascribed only to God Who is Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of

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[64] Muhammad Afifuddin, 'Makna Taat Kepada Allah, Rasul dan Ulil Amri', *Salafy* 4 (1996), p. 45.

[65] Ibid., p. 49.

[66] Taqiy al-Din Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah, *Minhaj al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyya fi Naqd Kalam al-Shi'a al-Qadariyya*, vol. 3 (Cairo: Al-Qahira, 1962), p. 391.

[67] Moussalli (1992), p. 151.

the universe.[68] In both Quṭb's thoughts and those of Mawdudi, the *ḥākimiyya* is understood to be one of the main components of *tawḥīd*.

Despite their assertion that a faithful Muslim should submit totally to God, the Salafis reject the so-called *tawḥīd ḥākimiyya* conceptualizing the *ḥākimiyya* as an independent branch of *tawḥīd*.[69] They support this position by referring to a number of *fatwās* issued by the Salafi authorities in Saudi Arabia maintaining that the *tawḥīd ḥākimiyya* is a form of *bid'a* exploited as a political weapon by *ḥizbiyya* groups.[70] Furthermore, the Salafis argue that this understanding implies a necessity to embrace the *takfīr* doctrine, which has been used by *ḥizbiyya* groups as a means to legitimize their revolts against legitimate Muslim rulers. As said in chapter III, this doctrine teaches that the rulers or even society as a whole who do not follow *sharī'a* are considered apostate (*kāfir*) and consequently should be resisted and replaced by true Islamic ones through the use of violence, if necessary. They call this tendency a modern manifestation of the politics of the Kharijites (*neo-Khāriji*), the early Islamic sect that became notorious for its declaring all other Muslims unbelievers under the banner of the *tawḥīd ḥākimiyya* or *mulkiyya*.[71]

Historically, the Kharijites emerged in the conflict that flared up in the aftermath of the assassination of 'Uthmān ibn 'Affān, the third caliph after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. They were deserters from the ranks of 'Alī ibn Abi Ṭālib, whom they repudiated because he agreed to arbitration in his conflict with Mu'awiya ibn Abi Sufyān demanding justice for the death of 'Uthmān. The main doctrine of the Kharijites is that by any infraction of the divine law, the ruler cedes his legitimacy and must be removed. The unjust ruler and his supporters are dismissed as infidels, unless they repent.[72] This classical conflict, as noted by Hrair Dekmejian (1995), has left its mark on present-day Islamists not only in their opposition to the *status quo* but also in their revolutionary method.[73]

From the Salafis' point of view, the use of the *takfīr* doctrine is a characteristic of what are called neo-Kharijite groups inspired by the thinking of Quṭb. Muhammad Umar as-Sewed insists that the use of the *takfīr* doctrine by Quṭb is highly dangerous, as it can lead Muslims into error and ultimately

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[68] Charles J. Adams, 'Mawdudi and the Islamic State', in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p.105.

[69] Salafy, 'Tauhid Hakimiyah antara Abdurrahman Abdul Khaliq dan Abdullah as-Sabt', *Salafy* 21 (1997), p. 14.

[70] Salafy, 'Fatwa Hai'ah Kibaril Ulama Saudi Arabia: Istilah Tauhid Hakimiyah adalah Perkara yang Baru', and Fatwa Nasr al-Din al-Albani, 'Penggunaan Kata Hakimiyya Termasuk Pelengkap Dakwah Politik', *Salafy* 21 (1997), pp.17-18.

[71] 'Tauhid Hakimiyah antara Abdurrahman Abdul Khaliq dan Abdullah as-Sabt', *Salafy,* 21 (1997), p. 15.

[72] See W. Madelung, 'Imama', *Encyclopedia of Islam*, III: 1169b, CD-ROM Edition v.10 (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

[73] R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World*, second edition (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995), p. 37.

catastrophe. Taking Rabīʿ ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī as his reference, as-Sewed goes on to argue that the *takfīr* doctrine of Quṭb was born of a false understanding of the phrase 'there is no God but Allah', in which he interpreted the word 'God' as *al-ḥākim*, the ruler, while there is no such connotation known in Arabic. He is convinced that as a consequence of this flawed understanding, Quṭb was far too ready to excommunicate other Muslims.[74]

Leaving aside historical considerations, the most crucial matter to note here is that the Salafis advocate a strict application of *sharīʿa*, in a sense a political claim, vitiating its criticism of *ḥizbiyya* groups. Submission to *sharī'a* is considered compulsory because it is God's law. They emphasize that taking *sharīʿa* as the only law to which Muslims should submit themselves constitutes one of the pillars of Islam. But they maintain that this is part of the *tawhid al-'uluhiyya*, which conveys that all kinds of worship are meant for God alone (and for none other, whether it be an angel, messenger, saint, idol, the sun, the moon and all other false deities), not an independent branch. In their eyes, to consider that those who do not apply *sharīʿa* stray necessarily into infidelity (*takfīr*), as implied by the *tawḥīd ḥākimiyya*, is a mistake.[75]

Interestingly, as reflected in an article written by Abu Sya'isa Adi Abdullah As-Salafy, another Indonesian Salafi writer, the Salafis can not avoid using the *takfīr* doctrine in their analyses of the legal consequences for rulers who reject *sharīʿa*. But their rejection of these rulers falls short of declaring them all unbelievers. They distinguish two categories among them: *Kāfir 'Iʿtiqādī* (infidel at the level of belief) and *Kāfir ʿAmalī* (infidel at the level of practice). While the first category is no longer considered a faithful Muslim, the second one is still measured as a Muslim, but a Muslim who commits sinful acts. Those who belong to the first category include:

1. Rulers who oppose the righteousness of the law of God and His messenger;
2. Rulers who do not oppose the law of God and His messenger, but believe that a law made by a being other than God and His messenger is better and more comprehensive;
3. Rulers who do not believe that man-made law is better than the law of God and His messenger, but consider the former is equal to the latter;
4. Rulers who do not believe in the equality between the law of God and His messenger and man-made law, and still consider the former is better than the latter, but keep an open mind about the latter; and

[74] Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, 'Bahaya Pemikiran Takfir Sayyid Quthb', *Salafy* 16 (1997), pp. 21-4.

[75] 'Jargon Baru,' 'Slogan Lama', *Salafy* 21 (1997), p.1.

5. Rulers who condemn *sharīʻa* and oppose God and His messenger.

Abu Syai'sa Adi Abdullah al-Salafy does not list those who belong to the second category. He only gives an example of a ruler who, because of his individual interests, judges something on the basis of laws made by human beings, but still believes that the law of God and His messenger is the only true law and is aware of the mistakes he has committed. In this case, he is considered to have fallen into *al-kabā'ir* (great sin).[76]

Here we see the political nuances of the Salafis' ideology. It is apparent that the necessity to submit to *sharīʻa* as a manifestation of *tawḥīd* has an inevitable consequence in their assertion that faithful Muslims should obey this law. Although it seems cautious about the impact of this doctrine by creating the category of *kāfir ʻamalī,* the Salafis have asserted *sharīʻa* is the only legitimate law and that it should be followed by Muslims. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that the boundary between the Salafis and members of other Islamist groups in terms of ideology is in fact very thin.

Democracy

The closeness of Salafi ideology to the thinking of the main Islamist ideologues, such as Quṭb and Mawdudi, has become more clearly delineated in their responses to political issues that have developed in the aftermath of the collapse of the New Order regime. One of the most important issues dealt with by the Salafis has been that of democracy: whether or not it is incongruent with Islam. In this respect, Ja'far Umar Thalib argues that foundation of governance in Islam is the conviction that all authority belongs only to God; He is the holder of absolute authority to which all creatures must submit. He insists that Muslims are prohibited to submit to the will of the majority of the people, since the majority of them are in error.[77]

Although he denies the concept of democracy, Ja'far Umar Thalib is of the opinion that a powerful and honourable ruler (*'ūlu al-'amr*) who upholds the law of God and His messenger must be established to guide the Muslim *umma*, and that this requires the full co-cooperation of religious scholars. The *'ūlu al-'amr* is not chosen by the people but rather by the *ahl al-ḥall wa'l-ʻaqd*, defined as 'a group of religious scholars and political leaders who act under the guidance of God and His messenger'. From his point of view, loyalty to the *'ūlu al-'amr* is a necessary part of loyalty to God and His messenger.[78] The ruler's authority comes in the form of vice-regency, or power delegated by God, and in many

[76] Abu Sya'isa Adi Abdullah As-Salafy, 'Kafirkah Berhukum Dengan Selain Hukum Allah?' *Salafy* 16 (1997), pp. 52-3.
[77] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Menyoal Demokrasi', *Salafy* 30 (1999), pp. 4-6.
[78] Ibid.

cases can be withdrawn from the ruler. The ruler thus has no real authority, for the source of authority remains God.

Ja'far Umar Thalib has, according to his own admission, truly sought to examine the history of democracy before coming to a conclusion that democracy is indeed a practice whose principles are in contradiction to Islam. He rejects associating democracy with the search for a solution to escape problems afflicting the Muslim *umma* today and castigates it as a secular teaching that has the potential to lead to chaos and destruction. He believes the only alternative for Muslims is to return to Islam:

> 'All attempts to get away from the problems afflicting our nation will fail except a return to the way prescribed by God and His messenger. Muslims should be convinced of this solution and they should be aware of God's warning that they are being colonized by erroneous opinions introduced by the West'.[79]

Behind this explanation lies an idea of an Islamic state imagined as a system in which the legitimacy of a ruler is solely based on the absolute authority of God and His messenger, or in other words, on the principles of *sharīʻa*.

To Ja'far Umar Thalib, the loyalty to a legitimate ruler chosen by the *'ahl al-ḥall wa'l-ʻaqd* is absolutely unconditional, regardless of his ability to fulfil the rights of people. People must obey their ruler, whether just or despotic; there can be no reason to resist him. But his definition of legitimate rule is neither absolute nor permanent. It is obviated when the government is led by a *kāfir*. In such a situation, rebellion is permitted in order to topple him from power, as long as Muslims have adequate power to achieve what they want. If they do not have the power, such a move is forbidden.[80]

This line of argument to some extent resembles Quṭb's notion of revolution; Quṭb taught that non-adherence to or a breaking away from Islamic law, which might qualify a ruler as a *kāfir*, is sufficient grounds for not just civil disobedience but for a full-scale revolution.[81] This radical conception distinguished Quṭb from other fundamentalist thinkers, who looked at revolution as an ethical concept and a political obligation. More moderate, Mawdudi saw revolution as a gradual and evolutionary process of cultural, social and political reform, whose objective was to be just (*ʻadl*) and benevolent (*iḥsān*). He thought that the process of changing the ethical basis of society should begin at the top and permeate down into the lower strata.[82]

The Salafis use the term *ṭāghūt* to describe the ruler whose non-adherence to *sharīʻa* is proven. In Islamist discourses *ṭāghūt* is a sort of metaphor for a ruler who rejects submission to *sharīʻa*. Abdul Mu'thi argues that

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[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Moussalli (1992), p. 156.
[82] Nasr (1996), pp. 76-7.

a ruler can be considered *ṭāghūt* when he applies and concomitantly submits himself to non-divine laws. Because of his opposition to *sharīʻa*, he postulates that the *ṭāghūt* is the source of error and destruction. Referring to a medieval Qur'anic scholar, Ibn Kathīr, he therefore suggests that whosoever does not submit himself to the law of God will become an unbeliever, and it is compulsory to kill him unless he returns to the law of God. However, he does say that this opinion is not necessarily applicable to those who are convinced that *sharīʻa* is better than secular law.[83]

This line of argument is very readily found among members of other Islamist groups in Indonesia, such as the NII movement. In its manual, the term refers to a dictatorial ruler rejecting *sharīʻa*.[84] Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, the main NII ideologue and the founder of Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia, underscores that although the ruler implements part of *sharīʻa* and enshrines Islam as the state religion, as long as he refuses to implement *sharīʻa* in its totality, he belongs to the category of *ṭāghūt* to whom resistance should be demonstrated:

> 'In the face of this sort of ruler, faithful Muslims should demonstrate their resistance. If they have the capability to resist by force, they should do so. If they lack such a capability, they should resist by word of mouth. If they do not have even this capability, they should keep resisting at least in their hearts, through refutation and disengagement. Muslims who do not demonstrate any kind of resistances have no faith'.[85]

Consequent upon their rejection of democracy, the Salafis oppose general elections. Muhammad Umar As-Sewed considers general elections to be a practice that deifies the will of the majority rather than the will of God. Consequently, it is tantamount to an act of polytheism.[86] In addition to this, an election is perceived as the way used by the enemies of Islam to undermine the Muslim *umma*:

> 'Those who agree with general elections and are active in them have positioned themselves as the enemies of Islam, because they give rights and opportunities to the enemies of Islam to condemn our religion as a religion incapable of providing its adherents with justice and prosperity. If they are convinced about the comprehensiveness of Islam, why should they accept the opinions of non-Muslims?'[87]

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[83] Abdul Mu'thi, 'Taghut Sumber Kesesatan', *Salafy* 31 (1999), p. 18.

[84] Imaduddin al-Mustaqim, *Risalah Tarbiyyah Islamiyyah Menuju Generasi Yang Diridloi Allah* (…), p.18.

[85] Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, 'Pedoman Mengamalkan Islam Menurut Al-Qur'an dan As-Sunnah', in Irfan Suryahardy Awwas, *Dakwah dan Jihad Abu Bakar Ba'asyir* (Yogyakarta: Wihdah Press, 2003), p. 87.

[86] Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, 'Beberapa Kerusakan Pemilu', *Salafy* 30 (1999), pp. 8-9.

[87] Ibid., p. 9.

A total rejection of democracy distinguishes the Salafis from members of Ikhwān al-Muslimīn and Jama'at-i Islami. Moderate wings of these two movements do not hesitate to take part in general elections. They consider elections a legitimate way to win control of power and through which the struggle for implementing *sharī'a* in a comprehensive manner can be realized. In Indonesia this position has been taken by the Partai Keadilan, which took part in the 1999 general elections. As we have noted before, this party later became the Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, which gained significant support in the 2004 general elections.

The Salafis' repudiation of democracy has to do with their hatred of Jews and Christians, whom they claim are the main enemies of Islam. Ja'far Umar Thalib argues that the permanent hostility shown by Jews and Christians to Islam has led them to try to hamper Muslims at every turn from implementing the teachings of their religion and, if necessary, to force them to leave it. As far as he is concerned, they are Satans who are never bored with their attempts to terrorize Muslims and remove them from the face of the earth. He relates his worries about the threat posed by Christians and Jews to the contemporary political situation in which he sees people who seem to follow so easily the wills of Jews and Christians, uncritically accepting arguments like defending the unity of the nation-state, maintaining the security of the people, and reducing the economic pressure afflicting society.[88]

Jihad

In the context of their response to the Moluccan conflict, the Salafis persistently called for jihad and emphasized it as an obligation to every Muslim. What they mean by jihad here is clearly an armed war. Muhammad Umar As-Sewed argues that Muslims in the Moluccas have become the targets of slaughtering by the enemies of Islam and that all Muslims are thus obliged to wage war in order to prove their commitment to *sharī'a*; any repudiation of the fulfillment of this obligation would carry the risk of being an outcast from Islam.[89] For Ja'far Umar Thalib, this is a manifestation of the completeness of a Muslim's submission to God and constitutes a higher obligation than pilgrimage, prayer or fasting,[90] an idea reminiscent of the opinions expressed by Ibn Taymiyya.[91] Jihad is thereby emphasized as an important part of *sharī'a* that should be followed by Muslims totally and as a manifestation of the strength of a person's *tawḥīd*.

The importance of jihad in Islam is rooted in the command given in the Qur'an to struggle on the path of God and in the example of the Prophet

[88] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Menangkal Makar Yahudi dan Nashrani', *Salafy* 31 (1999), pp. 30-2.

[89] Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, 'Mari Kita Sambut Panggilan Jihad!' *Suara Salafiyyah*, 1-1 (2000), pp. 2-3.

[90] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Jihad fi Sabil Allah: Solusi Problematika Bangsa dan Negara Indonesia', *Salafy* 34 (2000), p. 3.

[91] See Victor E. Makari, *Ibn Taymiyyah's Ethics* (California: Scholars Press, 1983), p. 124.

Muhammad and his early Companions. The term jihad itself comes from the Arabic verb '*jahada'*, meaning 'to struggle' or 'to expend effort' for a particular cause. In Islamic legal theory, the ways for a believer to fulfil his jihad obligation include using the heart, tongue, hands and the sword. The jihad using heart is concerned with combating the devil and it is regarded as the greater jihad (Ar. *jihād akbar*). The jihad using tongue and hands is for supporting the right and correcting the wrong ('*amar ma'rūf nahy munkar*). The jihad using swords is equivalent to the meaning of war and it is regarded as the lesser jihad (Ar. *jihād aṣghar*).[92]

Jihad in its meaning as a holy war received particular attention in the debates of classical Muslim jurists. They divided this jihad into two kinds: offensive and defensive. Offensive jihad is identical to the war against unbelievers in an effort to expand the territory of a Muslim state in order to bring as many people under its rule as possible. Participating in this jihad is considered a collective duty (Ar. *farḍ al-kifāya*), which is fulfilled if a sufficient number of people take part in it. If it is not fulfilled, all Muslims are sinning. The defensive jihad takes place when a territory of Muslims is attacked by the enemy, and participating in this jihad becomes an individual duty (Ar. *farḍ 'ayn*) for all Muslims capable of fighting. In both cases jihad requires the approval of a legitimate ruler (*imām*) and has always been regulated by a host of ethical prerogatives and legal sanctions.[93]

Unlike classical jurists, Muslim modernist thinkers, including Muḥammad 'Abduh and Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, were inclined to emphasize the nature of jihad as defensive warfare. They were of the opinion that peaceful coexistence is the normal state between Islamic and non-Islamic territories and jihad is only to be waged as a reaction against outside aggression. They envisaged various forms of aggression against which jihad is lawful, such as a direct attack on the territory of Islam or the suspicion thereof, and also the oppression of Muslims residing outside the frontiers of the Islamic state. To them, the offensive jihad as understood by classical Muslim jurists has no place in Islam. While emphasizing the defensive nature of jihad, they broadened its meaning to include all kinds of moral and spiritual struggle. In this regard, they considered the translation of jihad by holy war to be incorrect and resented.[94]

Fully aware of the word's spectrum of meaning, Ja'far Umar Thalib prescribes certain limits on and requirements for the compulsion to commit oneself to jihad. Referring to the concepts of jihad developed by Ibn Qayyīm al-

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[92] Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), pp. 56-7.

[93] See Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), pp. 3-17.

[94] Ibid., pp. 115-27.

Jawziyya,[95] the main disciple of Ibn Taymiyya, he distinguishes four levels of jihad, namely *jihād nafs*, *jihād al-shaiṭān*, *jihād al-kuffār wa al-munāfiqīn* and *jihād arbāb al-ẓulm wa'l-bid'a*. The *jihād al-nafs* means jihad against worldly temptations by, among other means, improving one's knowledge of religion, practising this knowledge in the right and proper fashion, spreading it to other Muslims and being consistent in all these efforts. The *jihād al-shaiṭān* refers to jihad against devilish influences from inside and outside the self. The *jihād al-kuffār wa'l-munāfiqīn* means jihad against unbelievers and hypocrites and is performed by heart, word of mouth, property and physical strength. The last one, *jihād arbāb al-ẓulm wa'l-bid'a,* means jihad against despotism and heresy.[96]

Ja'far Umar Thalib argues that what is intrinsic in jihad is a struggle to be consistent in keeping to the straight path, identical with the jihad of the first category. But the prevailing situation in the Moluccas demands Muslims wage a jihad of the third category, namely *jihād al-kuffār wa'l munāfiqīn*.[97] This category is still divided into two: *jihād al-ṭalab* or *jihād hujm* and *jihād mudāfa'a*. In a *jihād al-ṭalab,* one in which the offensive is taken, Muslims initiate an attack on infidels by offering them three choices: converting to Islam; paying a poll tax; or being subject to war. This sort of jihad is controlled by a host of regulations. For example, it can be carried out only under the command of a ruler (*imām*) whose legitimacy and leadership are approved by Muslims. In addition, it should be conducted under a strict ethical code; women and children are not allowed to be the targets of attacks. The *jihād al-mudāfa'a* is a defensive action, when Muslims are under attack by infidels. While the first jihad is categorized as a *farḍ kifāya*, the second one is a *farḍ 'ayn*.[98]

Most pertinent in this context is that the Salafis underscore this 'self-defence' argument to legitimize its calls for jihad in the Moluccas. They consider the jihad in the islands to be a defensive jihad waged against Jew-collaborating Christians attacking Muslims. This line of argument has been bolstered by some *fatwās* from the Middle East, as discussed in the previous chapter. According to Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī, 'it is an individual duty (*farḍ 'ayn*) for Indonesian Muslims and a collective duty (*farḍ kifāya*) for Muslims outside Indonesia to take part in the jihad in the Moluccas to assist Muslims facing their Christian enemies'. Al-Wādi'ī advises the Salafis 'to arise and conduct jihad in the name of God and overthrow Christians who occupy Muslim

[95] See his book, particularly chapter on jihad, *Zād' al-Ma'ād fi Hady Khayri al-'Ibād* (Beirut: Al-Muassasa al-Risala, 1987).

[96] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Jihad fi Sabil Allah: Solusi Problematika Bangsa dan Negara Indonesia', *Salafy* 34 (2000), pp. 4-5. See also Dzulqarnain bin Muhammad al-Atsary, 'Jihad Menurut Timbangan Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah', *Salafy* 34 (2000), pp. 11-4; and Ayip Syafruddin, 'Jihad sebagai proses Amar Ma'ruf Nahi Munkar', a paper presented to a panel entitled 'Menggagas Konseptualisasi dan Aktualisasi Ideal Jihad dalam Islam Kontemporer', held at IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, 28 October 2000.

[97] Ibid., p. 4.

[98] Al-Atsary (2000), p. 14; Syafruddin (2000).

territory'. Rabī' ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī says that 'it is an individual duty (*farḍ 'ayn*) to undertake jihad in the Moluccas in order to help Muslims attacked by Christian enemies'.[99]

Even though the rule pertaining to it is compulsory, al-Wādi'ī emphasizes the following conditions should be met by the Salafis:

1. Muslims must have the necessary military strength to wage a jihad against unbelievers;
2. The jihad should not cause physical violence among Muslims themselves;
3. Muslims must rely solely on their own strength, without the assistance of any unbelievers;
4. The jihad should be waged in the name of defending the Sunna, not for any political parties;
5. The jihad should not distract Muslims from studying their religion;
6. The jihad should not create the impression that those engaged in it want political power.

Muhammad Umar As-Sewed thereby claims that the nature of the Salafis' jihad is diametrically different from jihad launched by other Islamist groups active in fighting a war against Muslim rulers. He believes that this sort of tendency has meant that jihad has been dragged down to be more than equivalent to rebellion. There is constant reiteration that the call for jihad in the Moluccas is an unavoidable necessity since Muslims in the islands are fighting against belligerent infidels (*kāfir ḥarb*) who have been killing them and plundering their property. Those who reject this jihad, while claiming the necessity to wage jihad against a legitimate ruler, he argues, fall into the error of the *bid'a* of the Kharijites.[100] His basic criticism is aimed at the thoughts of Quṭb and Mawdudi who did champion aggressive jihad. As far as these two ideologues were concerned, jihad was a state of total war, declared to bring about an end to the domination of man over man and of man-made laws, the recognition of God's sovereignty alone and the acceptance of *sharī'a*.[101] In this respect, jihad is considered to be the sixth pillar of Islam. Quṭb even claimed that those who saw jihad only as defensive weapon did actually not understand Islam.[102]

Even though there is a necessity for Muslims to wage jihad when attacked, the Salafis still stress the need to wait for the approval and command

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[99] See Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Menepis Rekayasa Fatwa Seputar Jihad di Maluku', *Salafy* 34 (2000), pp. 8-9; Muqbil ibn Hadi al-Wadi'i, 'Rekomendasi Syaikh Muqbil bin Hadi al-Wadi'i tentang Anjuran Membantu Mujahidin dan Muslimin di Maluku', *Bundel Maluku Hari Ini*, March-July 2000 (Yogyakarta: FKAWJ, 2000). For a detailed discussion, see Hasan (2005).

[100] As-Sewed (2000a), pp. 11-3.

[101] Choueiri (1996), p. 29.

[102] Moussalli (1992), pp. 205-6.

of a legitimate ruler. In their eyes, jihad launched without the approval of a ruler would potentially bring chaos.[103] In this sense, their concept of jihad is no different from the classical one, which underlines that jihad can only be waged under the leadership of the legitimate *imām*. The importance of a ruler's approval has been emphasized by the *fatwā* of Aḥmad al-Najm, who advised the Salafis not to rush off to battle in the Moluccas without prior preparation or consultation. According to this *muftī*, the Salafis must follow these steps: (1) Choose a representative who will meet the ruler to advise and reproach him, and (2) if the ruler takes their suggestions into consideration, then he should be obeyed.

Ironically, however, the Salafis argue that in spite of the absence of the ruler's approval, jihad still can be waged if the ruler has strayed into infidelity or simply wickedness, because the approval of an infidel (or wicked) ruler is no longer needed. In this case Muslims might appoint a contemporary *imām* (ruler, also meaning leader) who would unite them.[104] Al-Najm's *fatwā* provides the foundation for this position, stating that 'if the ruler rejects the suggestions to wage jihad on certain necessary condition, then Muslims may rebel against him, provided that they have sufficient power'. Al-Najm adds that 'if there is no Muslim leader (*imām*) responsible for the jihad, then a temporary leader may be appointed'. Here lies the ambivalence of the Salafis, reinforcing their complicated conception of the relationship between Muslims and rulers. The question of when the ruler can be considered to have strayed into infidelity or wickedness is a matter of interpretation.

Understanding the *ḥukm* of jihad as described above, the Salafis believe that those who fulfil the call for jihad to assist their Muslim brothers attacked by belligerent infidels deserve to receive the title of martyr if killed on the so-called jihad battlefields. It is not surprising that they claim to have no fear of going to the Moluccas. They are convinced that they would be faced with only two possibilities: victory, and thus the upholding of Islam's dignity; or death, and thus the title of martyr, which is regarded as the highest title for a Muslim. In short, martyrdom is portrayed as a consummation that should be sought rather than as a risk that should be avoided. This belief developed with the circulation of religious texts, replete with Qur'anic verses and Prophetic Traditions extolling the merits of fighting a jihad and vividly describing the reward waiting in the hereafter for those slain during the fighting. These texts accompanied tales of martyrdom, describing, for instance, the martyr's body as pure and that it would be welcomed in heaven by thousands of angels.

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[103] See Abu Usamah bin Rawiyah An-Nawawi, 'Jihad Bersama Imam', *Salafy* 35 (2000), pp. 36-7.

[104] Dzulqarnain bin Muhammad al-Atsary, 'Ahkamul Jihad: Mengangkat Pemimpin dalam Jihad', *Salafy* 35 (2000), pp. 17-8.

Towards Which End?

It is worthy to spend the rest of this chapter analysing why the 'non-political-*da'wa*' ideology of the Salafis could so easily provide the foundation for political-jihad action that was waged under the aegis of Laskar Jihad. To answer this question, we should recall the key concept of the Salafi discourse, *tawḥīd*. In their interpretation, *tawḥīd* requires total submission to God. This submission is initially understood as a commitment to believe in God by avoiding all elements that smack of *shirk* and *bid'a*. Yet this commitment is not confined purely to the individual sphere, it is also social. It requires a faithful Muslim to devote himself to the efforts to purify Muslims' religious beliefs and practices from such corrupting elements. If this purpose is to be achieved, *da'wa* is essential, since the purity of a Muslim's beliefs and practices constitutes a *conditio sine qua non* for regaining the glory of Islam, as a promise of God to faithful Muslims that would be realized absolutely.

Nevertheless, the emphasis on the purity of Muslim beliefs and practices is only an early stage in a long process toward a triumphal conclusion. It is the stage at which the followers are recruited to join the community of *tawḥīd* (*muwaḥḥidūn*) whose steps are believed to be under the direct guidance of the example set by the Prophet Muhammad and early generation of pious Muslims (*Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*). Having succeeded in gaining admittance to this community, the doctrine of *al-walā' wa'l-barā'* is heavily emphasized as one of the pillars of Muslim belief and binds the followers closely together. Although the Salafis do not recognize the existence of *bay'a,* the doctrine of *al-walā' wa'l-barā'* is assurance enough that the loyalties of the followers are devoted only to the community. Their loyalties are reinforced even more by the doctrine of *ahl al-sunna wa'l jamā'a*. Believing this doctrine, the followers are completely convinced that they are Muslims who belong to the only group whose salvation is guaranteed since they belong to the community of the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions.

On the basis of the doctrine of *al-walā' wa'l-barā'*, firm distinctions are drawn between the members of the community and outsiders. The members of this community associate the outside people with *shirk* and *bid'a* whose lives are considered far from the principles of *tawḥīd*. The medieval heritage of Ibn Taymiyya's ideology, which developed in a period of high tension between Muslims and Christians, has added a dimension. The purity of this community is believed to guarantee the immunity of its members from the influences of infidels, to be identified with Jews and Christians. From their perspective Jews and Christians are two main enemies of Islam that are constantly awaiting an opportunity to undermine the Muslim *umma*. The particular pattern of dress, performance and social relationships adopted by the Salafis significantly express the feeling that they are constantly threatened by external influences spread by the enemies of Islam.

It should be noted that the identity emphasized here is not something that can be shared with other people, even those with the same characteristics. By exploring the issue of *ḥizbiyya*, the Salafis distinguish themselves from members of any other Islamist movements adopting similar doctrines and ideology. The main ideologues of Islamist movements become the primary targets of their criticism. In their attitude toward these ideologues, the Salafis criticize the political commitment they developed to such an extent they appear to be an anti-political group. Yet this claim does not guarantee their immunity from politics since some elements in their ideology have ambiguous meanings, particularly in relation to the notion of *sharīʻa*.

The political commitment of the Islamist ideologues generally stems from their interpretation of *tawḥīd,* which necessitates a submission to the *sharīʻa* (*ḥākimiyya*). The idea of the oneness of God and of His exclusive sovereignty is meant to reinstate Islam as a political system. The same thing is emphasized by the Salafis. But they do not continue the logic developed by the ideologues that submission to *sharīʻa* requires the establishment of an Islamic state (the *tawḥīd ḥākimiyya*). The Salafis regard an Islamic state as unnecessary. It is the promise of God to those who succeed in walking on the straight path in a consistent manner.

Having the same understanding as members of other Islamist groups in terms of the necessity to submit to *sharīʻa,* however, the Salafis face some difficulties in dealing with a question of the refusal of a ruler to follow *sharīʻa*. It is heavily emphasized in their discourse that there is no possibility in light of *sharīʻa* to revolt against such a ruler, except for a clause that ‘before his infidelity can be measured for sure’. This clause is important, because within a certain context it makes it possible for the Salafis to withdraw from their initial position. Relevant to this, Ja’far Umar Thalib has argued that in a chaotic situation the task of embracing good and forbidding evil, *al-’amr bi al-maʻrūf wa nahy ʻan munkar*, is a must and that this task can only be fulfilled properly through political power.[105]

Considering their ambivalent position, it is not difficult to envisage the Salafis’ resort to political activism and militancy, as clearly appeared in their calls for jihad in the Moluccas. They legitimize this resort by associating jihad with *daʻwa* and argue that jihad constitutes a form of Islamic propagation to build an ideal, alternaive society free from Western cultural stains. It is aimed at giving a correct understanding of prescriptions covering *ʻaqīda* (faith), *ʻibāda* (rituals), and *muʻāmala* (social life). In spite of this argument, the Salafis enter into the most dangerous political arena of the Islamists. Yet they emphasize that jihad in the islands is simply for the defence of Muslims against the attacks of belligerent infidels.

[105] Ja’far Umar Thalib, ‘Menyikapi Perkembangan Politik Nasional’, *Tasjilat Ihyaassunnah al-Islamiyyah*, cassette record, (Yogyakarta: FKAWJ, 2000).

It is important to stress here that by waging jihad the Salafis implicitly reject the authority of an existing ruler, in this case President Abdurrahman Wahid, since they believe that jihad is only allowed with the approval of a legitimate ruler. They argue that Wahid is no longer legitimate, and regard him not only as unjust, but as *kāfir*:

> 'Abdurrahman Wahid was clearly inclined to side with two groups, Christians and Communists, so that the position of Islam became dangerously exposed to the plot of the enemies of Islam. After we consulted some Salafi authorities in the Middle East, we could draw a conclusion that Abdurrahman Wahid is in fact a *kāfir* ruler on the basis of the statements he has made so far. He no longer deserved to title of the legitimate ruler who should be obeyed'. [106]

Here the clause 'after his infidelity has become clear' comes into play. There is no longer any need to obey a ruler deemed to have been trapped into infidelity. An Indonesian Salafi writer states, 'a ruler who has convincingly been proved to be a *kāfir* or to have given strange commands no longer deserves to be obeyed'. But he emphasizes that 'the obligation to disobey (rebel) against a ruler is valid as long as Muslims have ability to do so'.[107]

While rejecting the authority of Wahid, the Salafis appointed Ja'far Umar Thalib as temporary commander of their jihad mission in the Moluccas. By this appointment the Salafis implicitly regarded Ja'far Umar Thalib as a temporary ruler whose commands should be followed. For Ja'far Umar Thalib, the appointment was lawful because there was not already in place a legitimate ruler that should be obeyed by all Muslims. He argued that the situation in the Moluccas is even worse, because the ferocity of the conflict had made this province a territory without a ruler:

> 'Who is the ruler? All members of the state apparatus, including policemen, attorneys, judges, have forfeited authority. They were powerless. In practical terms there is no ruler'.[108]

While the Salafis were glorifying jihad, some of their ideologues espoused the perfect nature of the Islamic state as one that bestows mercy on the whole world. Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, for instance, has written:[109]

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[106] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Gus Dur Tak Berhak Ditaati', *Sabili*, interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib, 22: 7 (19 April 2000), p. 80.

[107] Abu Ubaidah Syafruddin al-Atsari, 'Kapan Saatnya Memberontak?' *Salafy* 37 (2001), p. 51.

[108] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Tuduhan Berlapis Menimpa Ja'far', *Gatra*, interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib, (19 May 2001), p. 30.

[109] Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, 'Islam sebagai Rahmat Untuk Seluruh Alam', *Salafy* 36 (2001), pp. 4-5.

> 'Why should we be afraid of an Islamic state, the state that protects all subjects and leads them to prosperity. This state will give non-Muslims opportunities to observe their religion, while witnessing the comprehensiveness of Islam. This will eventually encourage them to convert to Islam. This signifies that the Islamic state is a benediction for them. In this state, Muslims are not allowed to disturb non-Muslims living as *kāfir dhimmī,* on the condition that they obey the rules of the state and pay poll tax'.[110]

[110] In the discourse on *fiqh*, the term *kāfir* (plural, *kuffār*) refers to unbelievers, both *dhimmī* and *ḥarb*. Different from the latter, *dhimmī* are those who accept the authority of a Muslim state and live in harmony with Muslims. W. Bjorkman, 'Kafir', *Encyclopedia of Islam*, IV: 447b, CD-ROM Edition v.10 (Leiden: Brill, 1999). See also Ch. Cahen, 'Dhimma', *Encyclopedia of Islam*, II: 227a, CD-ROM Edition v.10 (Leiden: Brill, 1999)

CHAPTER VI

GLOBALIZATION, SHAKEN IDENTITY AND THE SEARCH FOR CERTAINTY

Thousands of militants welcomed the call for jihad in the Moluccas pioneered by the Salafi activists. They competed to enlist as voluntary fighters prepared to go to the frontlines in the Moluccas and fight against Christians. Their readiness to support the call was key to the success of Laskar Jihad formation. Through it, programmes formulated by the movement's actors could be translated into collective action. Even when it was still in its embryonic phase, Laskar Jihad enjoyed their support, as appeared in their vigorous engagement in organizing various *tabligh akbars* and other collective actions in a dozen cities across Indonesia.

The engagement of these people had generally been preceded by their association with the Salafi "Ihyaus Sunnah" movement. This movement has the characteristics of a strict religious organization, demanding complete loyalty, unwavering belief, and rigid adherence to a distinctive lifestyle of its members. To some extent it can be identified as a sect, defined by Laurence R. Iannaccone (1992) as 'a religious organization with a high committed, voluntary and converted membership, a separatist orientation, an exclusive social structure, a spirit of orientation, and an attitude of ethical austerity and demanding asceticism'.[1] As its name indicates, it is a kind of refuge for pure believers who undergo an internal *hijra* (migration) to shelter themselves from the stains and temptations of the outside world.

The task of this chapter is to uncover the puzzle of who they are. Germaine questions include: What is the social background of these people, especially by virtue of age, education, occupation, socio-economic position and psychological make-up? How did they join the movement? Discovering social attributes at the micro level—the motivations, impulses and aims of an

[1] Lawrence R. Iannaccone, 'Why Strict Churches Are Strong', *American Journal of Sociology* 99: 5 (March 1994). For a comparison see also Rodney Stark and William Sims Bainbridge, *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival, and Cult Formation* (Berkeley: University California Press, 1985) and Thomas Robbins, *Cults, Converts, and Charisma: The Sociology of New Religious Movements* (London: Sage, 1988).

individual's involvement in a radical Islamist movement—enables a sound analysis at the macro level of the sociological roots that have contributed to this phenomenon. Certainly, people are driven to join a religious movement by personal needs and these needs are rooted in identifiable social conditions.[2]

Social Composition

Laskar Jihad claimed to have recruited approximately 10,000 fighters out of 40,000 Salafis associated with the Ihyaus Sunnah network. This figure represents almost two-thirds of all male adults in the network, since women and children are automatically excluded from the obligation to participate in jihad. They are scattered all over Indonesia, from Medan in North Sumatra to Makassar in South Sulawesi, with concentrations in Central Java, including Yogyakarta, Solo, Wonosobo, Temenggung, Semarang, Kebumen, Purwokerto and Cilacap. The majority are therefore ethnically Javanese. In these regions they construct enclaves, called '*titik daurah*' (*daura* sites), which are usually centred on modest mosques or *muṣallas*, smaller places to pray.

During two different periods of my fieldwork, I systematically and intensively interviewed 125 Laskar Jihad fighters and veterans who had empirical evidence of their engagement in Laskar Jihad mission in the Moluccas. These interviews were conducted specifically for the purpose of discovering the social composition of this group. In my first fieldwork stint, I focused on the two main headquarters of Laskar Jihad, located at Degolan, Kaliurang, Yogyakarta and Cempaka Putih Tengah, Central Jakarta. In a dozen visits I succeeded in interviewing 27 fighters chosen randomly out of hundreds coming in and out the headquarters. Their availability and willingness to share experiences determined the respondents. In my second fieldwork stint, I broadened my attention to areas outside the two main headquarters. Interviews were conducted where Laskar Jihad veterans are concentrated both in and outside Java, including Yogyakarta, Solo, Magelang, Wonosobo, Semarang, Cirebon, Makassar and Ambon. During this fieldwork I interviewed 98 Laskar Jihad members who were also chosen randomly.

Insofar as I have been able to establish, these fighters are by and large young militants whose ages range between 20 and 35 years old. Almost half of them are university students, dropouts and graduates from a dozen universities in Indonesia, particularly those located in Central Java. These include Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Eleventh March State University in Surakarta, Diponegoro University in Semarang and General Sudirman University in Purwokerto. The only other universities represented are the Institute of Technology in Bandung and Hasanudin University in Makassar. These students

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[2] James A. Beckford (ed.), *New Religious Movements and Rapid Social Changes* (London: Sage/Unesco, 1988). See also Steve Bruce, *Religion in the Modern World: From Cathedrals to Cults* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

are generally enrolled in prestigious science and engineering departments, especially Physics, Electronics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Chemical Engineering, Electronic Engineering, Architecture, Medicine, Biology, Forestry and Animal Husbandry. Some are enrolled in departments of social sciences, such as Management, Accountancy, Political Sciences, Communications and Public Administration.

The fact that these universities are the main destinations of thousands of students from various regions in Central Java wanting to pursue higher education may shed some light on the family backgrounds of the fighters. Besides those from upper-middle and middle class homes, a significant number of these students come from the lower classes. For instance, Gadjah Mada University, which emerged as the biggest contributor of fighters to Laskar Jihad, notes that around 30 per cent of its students come from peasant families.[3] It is understandable then that, in contrast to the metropolitan University of Indonesia in Jakarta, this university is fond of cultivating a modest atmosphere of a '*kampus dheso*', a Javanese term meaning 'village campus'.

Indeed, most students engaged in the Laskar Jihad mission to the Moluccas and the other trouble spots openly acknowledge their simple rural background whose parents generally live as peasants with limited farmland. Because of the economic policy of the state that has tended to neglect agricultural development, it has become increasingly difficult for this stratum to improve their socio-economic status. These same students, however, reject any association between their rural background and their decision-making, because they perceive a great difference between themselves and their families in the countryside, particularly in terms of religious observance. Some clearly indicate that their families belong to the *abangan* group in Javanese society, who accept Islam only partly and still practise traditional rituals. In reality, the students themselves have only become properly acquainted with Islam after migrating to the cities in order to pursue higher education.

It is of interest to note that villages in Central Java's wet-rice heartlands are the most likely places to display a closeness to the *abangan*. Though Islam began to spread during the decline of the Majapahit Kingdom in the fourteenth century, large portions of this region remain the bastion of the *abangan* culture. This is because the Mataram court, which emerged as the political centre of Java by the end of the sixteenth century, did not purge Hindu-Buddhist religious legacies. Instead, it preserved a strongly indigenous and Indic style in the arts and in the political pageantry of the court.[4] Only in the nineteenth century did forms of orthodox Islam begin to exert a significant impact, exposing the

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[3] Bambang Purwanto, Djoko Suryo and Soegijanto Padmo (eds.), *Dari Revolusi ke Reformasi: 50 Tahun Universitas Gadjah Mada* (Yogyakarta: Universitas Gadjah Mada, 1999), p. 68.

[4] M. C. Ricklefs, *Islamization in Java: An Overview and Some Philosophical Considerations* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1984), pp. 13-5.

distinction drawn between the *abangan* and the *santri*. This distinction sharpened after Indonesian independence, when the commitment to orthodox Islam within the *santri* community was greatly strengthened in response to contemporary politics. Following the abortive Communist coup in 1965, however, *abangan* people felt a need to align themselves with one of the five religions recognized by the government. Because of their traumatic experience with Muslims, especially with Anshor youths of the Nahdlatul Ulama who helped the military kill thousands accused of being associated with Communism, many preferred to convert to Christianity, Buddhism or Hinduism.[5]

Generalizations are easy to make and should be treated with some caution. To balance the picture, it should be noted that there is a significant number of Laskar Jihad fighters from non-peasant families. They belong to the families of petty bureaucrats, teachers, small merchants and even businessmen in small towns or villages. Some claim to belong to *santri* families. Among them are sons of activists of small branches of Muslim modernist organizations, such as the Muhammadiyah. In contrast to fighters from the *abangan* families, they were well acquainted with Islam and its various aspects before becoming involved in Islamic activism. Many had even completed their secondary education in Muhammadiyah schools and had had experience in Muhammadiyah youth organizations such as the Muhammadiyah Scouts (Hizbul Wathan, HW) and the Muhammadiyah Youth Union (Ikatan Remaja Muhammadiyah, IRM). In addition to those from the *moderen santri* background, a few fighters came from the *kolot*, or old-fashioned, *santri* families associated with the Nahdlatul Ulama. A dozen fighters claim to have studied at traditional *pesantrens* in Central Java. They come from the north coast of the province, where the Nahdlatul Ulama members are concentrated.

Besides those from universities, Laskar Jihad recruited rank-and-file fighters whose educational background is limited to senior high school or lower. They were recruited from the outskirts of cities, small towns and villages. Generally with low income, they meet their daily needs by becoming petty traders, artisans, tailors, unskilled workers, factory workers, peasants and agricultural labourers. Some are even unemployed. Like their counterparts from the universities, they claim that they were from *abangan* families before transforming themselves into orthodox Muslims. Here the role of the Salafi *pesantrens* and other *da'wa* institutions in introducing them to orthodox Islam cannot be underestimated.

Solo is the city that most significantly contributed fighters from this social background to Laskar Jihad. As the seat of the Surakarta Court, Solo has many similarities with Yogyakarta. It shares the reputation of being the cultural centre of Javanese civilization. Both persistently preserve symbols of the

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[5] Ibid. See also A.H. Johns, 'Islam and Cultural Pluralism', in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Islam in Asia: Religion, Politics, and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 216.

abangan culture. Despite its *abangan* character, Solo's history is unique in the context of the dynamics of Islam in Indonesia. In this city the Sarekat Dagang Islam (Muslim Merchant Union, SDI), which later transformed itself into the Sarekat Islam (Muslim Union, SI), the first political organization of Indonesian Muslims, was born in the first quarter of the twentieth century.[6] As the organization's birthplace, Solo has consistently demonstrated a spirit of Islamism. Hadrami merchants who dominate sectors of traditional trade, such as batik, have cultivated and preserved this fervour. Their main competitors are Chinese merchants who appear to have the upper hand in controlling larger-scale trade. Thus it is no surprise that Solo has suffered from a social tension that occasionally erupted in turmoil and violence.[7]

The crucial position of Solo to Laskar Jihad is confirmed by certain clearly observable facts. According to Ayip Syafruddin, chairman of FKAWJ, it was the first city to state a readiness to support the jihad mission of Laskar Jihad to the Moluccas. The group's activities during its embryonic phase were organized there, where fourteen Salafi activity centres recruited hundreds of fighters from a wide range of occupational backgrounds: tailors, factory workers, pedicab drivers, artisans, peasants, agricultural labourers and teachers in village private schools. A few paid their own way to the Moluccas. Ja'far Umar Thalib also emphasizes Solo's importance. He argues that fanaticism of Surakartan Muslims in opposing the remnants of Communism became one of the most important considerations for him to choose the city as the place where FKAWJ *tabligh akbars*, which led to the formation of Laskar Jihad, took place.[8]

Wonosobo is another region in Central Java that has likewise contributed a significant number of combatants to Laskar Jihad. In contrast to the fighters from Solo, those from Wonosobo, which used to be a largely *abangan* region, are mostly peasants, or, more precisely, agricultural labourers who cultivate potatoes, cabbages, carrots and other vegetable crops on ex-plantation areas controlled by businessmen who live both inside and outside the town. Some villages have provided fertile ground for the Salafi *da'wa* movement. Adjacent to Wonosobo, Temenggung, a tobacco-producing region, also contributed several hundred fighters to Laskar Jihad. The majority are tobacco growers, or agricultural labourers working on tobacco-farming land. A similar contribution was made by Kebumen and Cilacap, two other regions located in the south of the same province. From these two regions, hundreds of

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[6] On the intellectual and ideological developments in Surakarta in the early twentieth century and their relations with marked popular unrest in the region, see Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1920-1926* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

[7] For a further account on social tension in Surakarta, see Soedarmono, *Kajian Historis Model Kota Konflik dan Rekonsiliasi: Studi Historis Kerusuhan di Surakarta* (Jakarta: Direktorat Sejarah Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2001).

[8] Interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib, Yogyakarta, 22 December 2002.

rice-growing peasants, agricultural labourers and petty traders joined the Laskar Jihad mission.

Outside Java, cities that made major manpower contributions are Pekanbaru, Balikpapan and Makassar. Non-Javanese fighters of Laskar Jihad generally came from these three cities. Before joining they worked as peasants, agricultural labourers, factory workers, sailors, pedicab drivers and petty merchants. Pekanbaru is one Sumatran city that has not played much of a role in the history of Islamic movements in Indonesia. Islamism emerged there only in the mid-1990s with the establishment of the Salafi *pesantren*, al-Furqan. This contrasts with Balikpapan, located in East Kalimantan, which had become acquainted with Islamism earlier, when Abdullah Said, the founder of the Pesantren Hidayatullah, built his *pesantren* in the area of Gunung Tembak at the beginning of the 1970s. Nevertheless, Islamism in these two cities does not run particularly deep compared to Makassar, which enjoys a widespread reputation for Islamist zeal bequeathed to it by the Kahar Muzakkar-led *Darul Islam* rebellion in the 1950s.

Acquaintanceship with Islam

For these people, joining Laskar Jihad appears to have been a sort of religious adventure. It normally began with an acquaintanceship with an orthodox version of Islam disseminated by a variety of Islamic *da'wa* groups operating under the banner of the *Tarbiya* movement. As noted in chapter II, these groups have developed since the beginning of the 1980s on university campuses and other target areas. People became acquainted with Islam in different ways. Some actively sought out religious activities organized by the groups as soon as they arrived in the cities. Others were passive seekers, whose interest was aroused only after they unwittingly became targets of Islamic mission activities. This process occurred primarily through pre-existing social networks and interpersonal bonds. The pattern has been, as Lorne L. Dawson (2003) suggests, 'friends recruit friends, family members each other and neighbors recruit neighbors'.[9] Closeness with an active member of an Islamic group, either familial or spatial, therefore, has often been a determining factor.

In the work cited earlier, Iannaccone underscores the significance of social ties in determining one's engagement in a strict religious movement. He argues that people who lack extensive social ties to friends and family outside the sect are more likely to join (or remain active) and are still more likely to join if they have friends or family in the sect. On the contrary, those who have extensive social ties are less likely to join the sect. He emphasizes that a potential member's social ties predict conversion far more accurately than his or

[9] Lorne L. Dawson, 'Who Joins New Religious Movements and Why: Twenty Years of Research and What Have We Learned?' in Lorne L. Dawson (ed.), *Cults and New Religious Movements: a Reader* (London: Blackwell, 2003), p. 119.

her psychological profile. From Iannaccone's point of view, however, this is not the only variable in one's conversion to a sect. Economic factors also play a role. He suggests that people with limited secular opportunities, such as those with low wage rates, limited education or minimal job experience are more likely to join compared to those who have established economic positions. This is associated with the variable of cost and benefit: Those most likely to join are those with the least to lose.[10]

It is of interest to look at the life-history of some Laskar Jihad fighters. F. Abu Ahmad, a fighter from Solo who was born into an *abangan* family faithful to Javanese *kebatinan* (syncretic mysticism), reveals that his interest in Islam only began ten years ago during the first year of his study at the Mathematics Department of Gadjah Mada University:

> 'At that time, some of my colleagues who happened to come from the same city as I told about the Shalahuddin Community which organized regular religious lectures. They suggested I attend the lectures, insisting on their usefulness in broadening one's insights in Islam. But I lacked the confidence to do so, particularly because of my awareness of my ignorance of basic knowledge of Islam. But my colleagues continued to try to convince me about the importance and magnificence of the lectures until I finally decided to follow them. I still remember, the first time I attended the lectures I sat in the back corner of the sports centre used by the Shalahuddin Community as the venue for its activities. I believed that it was better late than never. My zeal to follow the lectures regularly developed parallel to the unfailing support I received from my colleagues in that community'.[11]

Having been active in the Shalahuddin Community, which constituted one of the most important centres of the *Tarbiya* movement in Yogyakarta, he joined what was later recognized as Ikhwān al-Muslimīn. But he claimed that he was not satisfied with the movement, because its religious doctrines lack the proper references in the Qur'an and Sunna. Two years before Laskar Jihad was born, he joined the Salafi movement.

Similar experience was recounted by a dozen other fighters, including the main lieutenants of Laskar Jihad, such as Ayip Syafruddin, Ma'ruf Bahrun, Hardi Ibnu Harun, Eko Raharjo, Abu Zaki Eri Ziyad and Adib Susanto. Like F. Abu Ahmad, their interest in Islam also began to grow in the first or second semester of their studies in universities, after they had become acquainted with activists of Islamic movements popular on the campus. This acquaintanceship led them to join Ikhwān al-Muslimīn, Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr, the NII movement or even Tablighi Jama'at, which has been relatively apolitical. Through their

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[10] Iannaccone (1994), pp. 1200-1.
[11] Interview with F. Abu Ahmad, Yogyakarta, 2 January 2003.

engagement they got to know Salafi activism and eventually decided to act themselves. In general, they claimed their move was inspired by their admiration for Salafi doctrines, which they believed offered a more solid foundation for an understanding of true Islam.[12]

The importance of pre-existing social networks and interpersonal bonds is more remarkably demonstrated by the case of Abdurrahman Abu Hamzah. He comes from a peasant family in Boyolali. After completing senior high school, he followed in the footsteps of his elder brother by continuing his studies at Eleventh March State University in Solo. There, he lodged with his brother in a small room of a rented house shared with other students. It came as a surprise to him to know that his brother was an activist in the NII movement and organizing secret cells. In the beginning, he claims that he was not interested in any invitation to attend secret religious lectures organized by his brother or his brother's companions:

> 'I only attended when the lecture was held in my own rented house. At that time they discussed an issue of *tawḥīd*, on the basis of which they criticized the religious conviction of other Muslims. My interest grew greater and greater parallel to the increasingly persistent attempts made by my brother and his companions to involve me in all the religious lectures they organized. As I attended lectures more frequently, my curiosity about the doctrines underpinning their religious conviction continued to grow and this made me conscious of the mistakes I had committed'.[13]

Having dedicated his life to the NII activism, he moved to the Salafi movement partly because he was tired of its clandestine nature.

Understanding pre-existing networks and interpersonal bonds reveals how fighters from the same families engaged in the Laskar Jihad mission to the Moluccas. One such example was the case of M. Fathullah, who went to the Moluccas with his younger brother, A. Rahman. The latter joined the Salafi movement because of his elder brother's persistent persuasion. After joining the movement, he soon transformed himself into a dedicated follower. Less than one year after his engagement, he decided to enlist among Laskar Jihad fighters going to the Moluccas. His decision inspired his elder brother to do the same.[14]

In some cases, the building of networks and interpersonal bonds appears to have been accidental. For example, M. Haris ibn Mas'ud, a fighter from Magelang, who was born into a family of Muslims, Roman Catholics and Hindus, told how his engagement with Islamic activism began with his accidental acquaintanceship with Salafis in a mosque near his rented house:

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[12] Interviews with Ayip Syafruddin, Ma'ruf Bahrun, Hardi Ibnu Harun, Eko Raharjo, Abu Zaki Eri Ziyad and Adib Susanto on different occasions in Jakarta and Yogyakarta.

[13] Interview with Abdurrahman Abu Hamzah, Solo, 28 December 2002.

[14] Interview with M. Fathullah and A. Rahman, Yogyakarta, 10 January 2003.

> 'It was during the first semester of my enrolment in the Electronic Engineering Department of Gadjah Mada University. At that time, being bored to stay all the time in a small rented room, I was suddenly moved by a desire to participate in a collective prayer in a mosque near my house. When I went to al-Hasanah mosque, I met by chance some Salafis who had just completed their study session on Islam. This is how I got to know some of them and became engaged in a discussion. This discussion apparently impressed me very much. I began to think seriously about several points they had emphasized, particularly in relation to the question of *tawḥīd*. After that I became active in attending collective prayers in the same mosque and consequently my friendship with the Salafis grew closer. I visited them in their houses or some of them visited me in my house. At every meeting we discussed various religious issues in depth'.[15]

Another fighter, Muhammad Ali Akbar, joined the Salafi movement when his original intention was to write a paper about its doctrines. Of a Muhammadiyah family, he was a student in the Chemical Engineering of Gadjah Mada University and the paper was assigned by his lecturer in religious instruction who happened to have experience as an activist of the *Tarbiya* movement:

> 'Because of the nature of this assignment, I was forced to become active in listening to Salafi lectures organized in Degolan. My curiosity about this movement developed in line with the frequency with which I attended the lectures. I found magnificence of the teachings discussed in the lectures because everything was based on the Qur'an and Sunna. In addition, I had the opportunity to get to know some of Salafis personally, and I engaged with them in debates about some aspects of Islam. I eventually decided to be an active member of the movement after I had been convinced about its truth'.[16]

This pattern was repeated among Laskar Jihad fighters from non-university backgrounds, but the economic dimension that steered their engagement is more apparent. Abdul Fatah, a fighter from Semarang of an *abangan* peasant family, recounts that having completed senior high school, he intended to continue his studies at university, but his plans were frustrated by his parents' economic situation. He went to Jakarta to find a job and shared a rented room with a friend from the same village who worked in a discotheque. Through this friend he became acquainted with the nightclub life of the metropolitan city. He became a bartender in a discotheque. He followed this profession for around

[15] Interview with M. Haris ibn Mas'ud, Yogyakarta, 24 December 2002.
[16] Interview with Muhammad Ali Akbar, Yogyakarta, 20 December 2002.

three years before deciding to quit and return to his native village for reasons about which he himself seems reluctant to speak:

> 'Having no job I was persuaded by one of my old colleagues studying at Diponegoro University to attend religious lectures in a mosque near the university. Initially I turned down this invitation. But his enthusiasm to convince me of the magnificence of the lectures never flagged. Prompted by a desire not to disappoint the friend, I eventually attended a lecture, in which a Salafi *ustāz*, gave the talks. This introduction fired my curiosity about Islam. I was gradually enthralled by the magnetism of the lecture. As a result, I frequented various places where such lectures were given. For me, learning about Islam, after having first ventured into the nightclub life, was initially highly frustrating. You can imagine, how difficult it was; from a glamorous life in Jakarta to a plain Salafi life in Semarang. But I survived thanks to the enthusiastic support of my Salafi friends'.[17]

An exception apparently needs to be made in the case of Muhammad Sodik, a fighter from Yogyakarta. He recounts that having completed studies at a Senior Technical High School, he could not find the job he wanted and found this very hard to accept. As the eldest son of a poor family, he had to support his parents. His life changed when he found a job in an electronics factory in Batam, an industrial island near Singapore, in 1994. He worked there for about four years, but he was dismissed in 1998 following the Asian economic crisis. He went to Pekanbaru to look for another job, but all he found there was trouble. His savings evaporated. He recounts:

> 'At that critical moment, a friend I had just met a few days before persuaded me to attend a religious lecture in a mosque near my rented room. There I was introduced to the Salafi movement and persuaded to join. Initially I had not been interested in it at all. But after that, several times a week I went over to the mosque and joined collective prayers. Sometimes I heard the religious lectures they organized after the collective prayers. After the lectures, I was usually asked about my opinion of the lectures. Debates and discussions frequently arose among us. To convince me, they provided me with some editions of the journal *Salafy*. In this way my understanding of Salafi doctrines developed very fast. Initially I found it an extremely difficult task, so I nearly gave up. But thanks to the support of my Salafi friends I met there, I survived and quickly succeeded in transforming myself into a dedicated Salafi'.[18]

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[17] Interview with Abdul Fatah, Semarang, 7 February 2003.
[18] Interview with Muhammad Sodik, Yogyakarta, 1 November 2001.

Reborn as True Muslims

For these people, becoming acquainted with Islam later in life had its own consequences. They became directly involved in strict Islam, intermingled with the zeal of militancy. As we have noted earlier, since the mid-1980s, university campuses have witnessed an Islamic resurgence in which the Salafi movement, in conjunction with other Islamic movements such as Ikhwān al-Muslimīn, Ḥizb al-Taḥrīr, and NII, has exerted a great deal of influence. The Islam they studied, therefore, was Islam inspired by fundamentalist ideologues such as Ḥasan al-Banna, Sayyid Quṭb, Abul A'la al-Mawdudi, Ali Shariati and Ayatollah Khomeini, or of their predecessors Taqiy al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyya, Muḥammad Ibn Qayyīm al-Jawziyya and Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb.

In contrast to traditional Islam, this so-called campus Islam entails doctrines and beliefs that are literal and relatively coherent, centred on the contrast between *shirk* and *tawḥīd*. Obtaining an understanding of Islam in this manner was in many instances a shocking experience to people who had little previous knowledge about Islam. They were faced with a choice between black and white. To reject the call to Islam means to remain an infidel. But if they were already locked in this logic, it would not be easy for them to escape. This rigid logic appealed particularly to scientific and technical students trained in the framework of mathematical formulas. Congruent with the rise of conforming to the orthodox Islam, their acquaintanceship often continued through *halqas* and *dauras*.

Learning about Islam in this way, they usually try hard to disassociate themselves quickly from their village past. They emphasize this as their *jāhiliyya* period, dominated by the sins of *shirk* and *bid'a*, and regret that the light of true Islam came so late to their villages:

> 'When I still lived in my village I did not know that the Islam practised by my villagers was full of *shirk* and *bid'a*. How could they possibly claim that they were Muslims while they did not refrain from visiting tombs, organizing *slametans*, and making offerings under big trees. Why should they worship tombs and trees which can do nothing to help? This is their own stupidity'.[19]

They criticize their own past religious convictions and generally agree that although nominally registered as Muslims as soon as they were born, they did not become Muslims until the true light of Islam shined on them:

> 'After I realized that I did not deserve to claim that I was a Muslim, because of my past haunted by *shirk*, I worked hard to study Islam. This is because of the fact that my religious conviction was still very superficial. At that time, I could not

[19] Interview with Abdul Walid ibn Musa, Jakarta, 23 October 2001.

> recite the Qur'an correctly, and consequently, was not able to perform prayers properly. I think the prayers that I had hitherto sometimes performed did not make any sense, because I did not perform them correctly in the light of references in the Qur'an and Sunna'.[20]

This sort of consciousness encourages them to study Islam seriously. Even when faced with great difficulties, they always seem enthusiastic to embark on a study of how to recite the Qur'an and how to perform the ablutions (*wuḍū'*) and prayers (*ṣalāt*) properly. Those who could already recite the Qur'an still feel it necessary to be able to recite it better. They are ashamed when they become aware of their failure to pronounce some letters of the Arabic alphabet, such as *'ayn*, correctly. Among Javanese, *'ayn* is usually pronounced as *ngain.* To polish up their pronunciation, they eagerly listen to cassettes of Qur'an recitation (*murattal*) by well-known reciters from Saudi Arabia, available everywhere from traditional markets to luxurious modern supermarkets. Under the atmosphere of Islamic resurgence that has made religious symbols become one of the most important social indicators, such commodities gained popularity and prominence.

In the next stage, they adopt a new, Arab-style costume and let their beards grow long. This move is usually accompanied by a commitment to distance themselves from their previous environment. By doing so, they feel that they can more readily assert their claim to be true Muslims. Subsequently, they usually change their *abangan* names for Arabic (Islamic) ones. Names like Sutarto, Hartono, Raharjo, Suryanto, Haryanto, Sumarjono and Wardoyo are replaced by Ahmad Haris, Muhammad Chalid, Abdullah, Abdul Wahhab, Hamzah, Ibn Usman and Ibn Rasyid. Those who have children just adopt their children's Arabic names and insert Abu before them, becoming Abu Khalid, Abu Ahmad, Abu Mash'ab and Abu Sulaiman. This process of dissociation from tradition occurs quickly.

When asked why they have done so, they argue that as Muslims they should practise the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad consistently. The change of name is considered part of their commitment to implement the Sunna. They insist that their new names were used by the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ* in the early period of Islam. Others acknowledge that the newly adopted names were 'the names of the *hijra*', a reminiscence of Quṭb's idea. They assert that the move from the *jāhiliyya* culture dominated by *shirk* and *bid'a* into Islamic culture should be total. To adopt an Arabic name is a sign of commitment to leave the *jāhiliyya* culture.[21] At the same time, they try hard to use as many Arabic terms as possible in their daily conversations. They usually prefer, for instance, to call

[20] Interview with Muhammad Abu Ihsan, Yogyakarta, 31 December 2002.
[21] Interviews with Abdullah al-Ghifari and Abu Rufaidah, Yogyakarta, 3 January 2003.

their friends with *akhī* (brother) or *ukhtī* (sister) or the plural *ikhwān* (brothers) or *akhawāt* (sisters).

The growing consciousness about leaving the old culture among the *abangans* does not necessarily happen only among those who migrated to cities in order to find better lives. In some instances, this phenomenon has occurred among the *abangans* in their own villages. This might be explained by the expansion of Muslim preachers attached to Muslim organizations who have devoted themselves to organizing religious lectures in remote areas. In one way or another, this expansion has succeeded in paving the way for the inclusion of *abangan* villages in orthodox Islam, which has in turn created a demand for the presence of Islamist movements active in organizing secret cells or building Islamic teaching centres. Doubtless, this expansion has to do with *santri*'s attempt to contain the mass conversion of 'ex-communist' *abangan* people to Christianity and Hinduism in response to Soeharto's campaign against Communism, as noted earlier.

In this regard, it is of interest to note what happened in Pakisan, a village located in densely populated hill country 25 kilometers to the north of the town of Wonosobo. It is one of the villages on the Dieng Plateau which lies 2093 metres above sea level. On a nearby hill, there is a well-known site of Hindu temples. To reach this hill it is necessary to take a steep winding road. Public transport is extremely limited. Passengers have to wait in the Wonosobo terminal for two to three hours before old mini buses pick them up. Paradoxically, along the way there are a dozen mosques on either side of the road. There are also offices, schools, a health clinic that belongs to the Muhammadiyah, and several offices and a *pesantren* that belong to the Nahdlatul Ulama. The atmosphere of competition between the Muhammadiyah and the Nahdlatul Ulama is palpable. Wonosobo itself is a region known for its fanatical Nahdlatul Ulama population.

The Muhammadiyah was the first organization to concern itself with Islamizing Dieng *abangan* people. This attempt only began to show results in the mid-1980s, precisely when the village leader of Pakisan began to support Muhammadiyah activities. He was an affluent businessman who had a large area of farmland and controlled a number of guesthouses on the hill. On his initiative a mosque and *muṣallas* were built.[22] Given his support, Muhammad Adib, a Muhammadiyah preacher who also served as a teacher in an Islamic school, organized religious lectures in the mosque. He was a graduate of the Tarbiya Faculty of the Sunan Kalijaga State Institute of Islamic Studies in Yogyakarta.[23] The interest of the Dieng *abangan* people in studying Islam grew rapidly, keeping pace with the intensification of the *da'wa* activities carried out by Muhammad Adib.

[22] Interview with Sutarto Abu Muaz, Wonosobo, 7 January 2003.
[23] Interview with Muhammad Adib, Wonosobo, 6 January 2003.

In the early 1990s, Muhammad Adib began to feel that the Muhammadiyah no longer represented the true, pristine Islam. He claims that he started feeling this way after he made the acquaintance of some Salafi *ustazs* that led him to obtain a deeper understanding of Salafi doctrines. He was eager to go to Solo, Yogyakarta and other cities to participate in the *halqas* and *dauras* organized by Abu Nida, Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, Ja'far Umar Thalib and Yazid Abdul Qadir Jawwas, and eventually decided to become a dedicated supporter of the Salafi *da'wa* movement. He had no difficulty in finding followers, as he had a reputation as a good preacher in Wonosobo. He only needed to adjust the contents of his lectures to conform to Salafi doctrine. The circles of his dedicated Salafi followers quickly formed in several places where he had already had great influence.

The influence of the Salafi *da'wa* movement organized by Muhammad Adib reached Pakisan, too. Through religious lectures delivered regularly in a mosque, he succeeded in convincing the Pakisan people to adhere to Islam totally. In about three years, almost half out of five hundred families transformed themselves into Salafis and more than thirty of them joined the Laskar Jihad mission in the Moluccas. Interestingly, they have remained modest farmers or agricultural labourers working every day on ex-plantation farmland owned by affluent businessmen, planting potatoes, carrots, cabbages and other vegetable crops. But one hour before the noon prayer they usually rush home to take a bath, put on *jalabiyya* and go to mosque. The conversion of the Pakisan people to Salafism appears in many instances to have been a family conversion, though it was not always the family head that led the conversion. The eldest son was often the catalyst for the conversion of the whole family. Interestingly, although they live in remote areas, they are as fluent as their Salafi counterparts in Yogyakarta in discussing various aspects of Salafi doctrines. They are particularly concerned with *al-walā' wa'l-barā'*, *ḥizbiyya*, *jāhiliyya*, *hijra* and above all *shirk* and *bid'a*.[24]

What happened in Pakisan has to some extent a parallel in the case of the conversion of villagers adhering to the syncretistic Buda religion on the Besuki Hill, 30 kilometres to the east of the city of Malang, East Java, into Islam, as analysed by Robert W. Hefner (1987). By the mid-1960s, when *santri-abangan* tension was still palpable throughout Java in the wake of the mass killings of alleged communists after the aborted coup of 1965, the Besuki area witnessed rapid Islamization marked by the emergence of Islamic social, educational and political institutions. A new village chief elected in 1968 accelerated this process. Because of his initiative, a new mosque, eight new prayer houses and a primary school were built. This initiative appeared to encourage villagers to associate themselves with Islam. Using this case, Hefner

[24] Interview with Hartono Abu Hafiz, Ahmad Sabaruddin and Sutarto Abu Muaz, Wonosobo, 7 January 2003.

proposes a hypothesis that religion is a social institution that depends upon a particular social and political configuration. He suggests that a change in religious culture is related to 'the construction of political institutions under which some meanings would be shared and others denied'.[25]

In Hefner's analysis, the expansion of Islam, a world religion, in the Besuki area shook up the Buda people's consciousness of cosmology, because the emphasis placed by the generalized doctrines and cosmology of world religions such as Islam on a supreme deity (high cosmology) removes cults of territorial and ancestral spirits (low cosmology). Borrowing Geertz's analysis on Bali, Hefner continues by arguing that doctrines and beliefs that are more abstract, more logically coherent, and more generally phrased, function to maintain a meaningful tie between man and the removed divine:

> 'Cosmological change does not occur because religion and cosmology are symbolic "replicators" of some more primary social field, but because, in moving out into an expanded world, people confront a whole host of intellectual problems for which the old cosmology, tailored to the demands of a familiar small-scale society, is no longer sufficient. Only a less particular, more generalizable cosmology is capable of meeting the intellectual challenge of daily life'.[26]

Paradoxes of Modernization and Globalization

There is no doubt that the phenomenon under consideration is inexorably associated with the processes of modernization set in motion by rapid social change. Since Soeharto came to power in 1966, Indonesia has steadily been caught up in attempts to accelerate the process of modernization and development. To achieve this purpose, the government initiated *Pelita*, the five-year planned development program, in 1969. One of the main targets of development was to increase the rate of literacy, which motivated the government to spend large amounts of money on the infrastructural development of primary schools. New schools were constructed across the entire archipelago, enabling villages to have full access to basic education. Since 1974 primary school education has been compulsory for children between the ages seven and twelve. In making education more affordable, attractive and accessible, the new system also brought absenteeism under control.[27] As a result, between 1965 and

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[25] R.W. Hefner, 'Islamic Conversion in Modern East Java', in William R. Roff, *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning: Comparative Studies of Muslim Discourse* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1987), p. 76.

[26] Ibid, pp. 70-1.

[27] B. Leigh, 'Learning and knowing boundaries: Schooling in New Order Indonesia', *Sojourn*, vol. 14, no. 1 (1999), pp. 34-56.

the early 1990s, the percentage of young adults with basic literacy skills rose from about 40 per cent to 90 per cent.[28]

In order to absorb the number of children finishing primary school, the government was forced to set up new junior and senior high schools. These schools were no longer confined to cities and large towns, which were difficult for villagers to reach; they were also built in small towns near villages in remote areas. In response to this availability, the numbers of young people attending junior high and senior high school rose significantly from year to year. Keeping pace with the improvement in societal economic prosperity, the ambition of the pupils finishing senior high school to continue their studies to university also increased. This provided a catalyst for the increase in participation in higher education. More and more people who come from small villages in the countryside have enrolled in modern schools and universities in big cities such as Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya, Yogyakarta and Makassar.

Simultaenously, Islamic resurgence gained prominence in cities and gradually reached the countryside, where the government was building streets, bridges, electricity power stations and local health care centres. This infrastructure reduced the isolation of villages and led to the rise of the market economy and the wave of urbanization. As a result, the living conditions of most villagers have improved significantly. Hal Hill (1994) notes a substantial increase in real GDP per capita from US$ 190 in 1965 to US$ 570 20 years later.[29] The increase has enabled villagers to purchase luxury consumer goods, such as radios and televisions, whose introduction into the countryside inevitably incorporated villagers into the global world, prompting a new pattern of life and introducing the consumerism associated with the global capitalist economy.

Ironically, while the scope of individual freedom increased, resources remain insufficient, so that the modernization of villages has made it structurally more difficult for large sections of the population to take advantage of normative progress. This development has been accompanied by an intensified presence of the state in almost all spheres of the everyday life of villagers. The most important actors for state intervention in the village have been the village headmen. In the New Order era these were members of the state-party, Golkar, and incorporated into the national bureaucracy. Through them, the government penetrated and maintained tight control over village activities. A number of institutions at the village level were created, including the Village Assembly (*Lembaga Musyawarah Desa*) and the Village Community Resilience Board (*Lembaga Ketahanan Masyarakat Desa*), to guarantee the loyalty of villagers to

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[28] Gavin W. Jones and Chris Manning, 'Labour Force and Employment during the 1980s', in Anne Booth (ed.), *The Oil Boom and After: Indonesian Economic Policy and Performance in the Soeharto Era* (Kuala Kumpur: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 363-410.

[29] Hal Hill, 'The Economy', in Hal Hill (ed.), *Indonesia's New Order: The Dynamics of Socio-Economic Transformation* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1994), p. 57.

the government.[30] In the process of development, the state has emerged as the dominant authority, replacing traditional forms.

Max Weber emphasized the decline in traditional forms of authority as one of the main consequences of modernization. It occurred in tandem with the rise of rationality, which resulted in a shift in the way people view life. He saw this as a part of a general process in which (identity-based) communal action (*Gemeinschaft*) is replaced by (rationally regulated) social action (*Gesellschaft*). Weber employed the terms to refer both to institutional changes involving differentiation, specialization and the development of hierarchical, bureaucratic forms of social organization, and to intellectual or attitudinal trends entailing the 'disenchantment of the world' and the process by which 'ideas gain in systematic coherence and naturalistic consistency'.[31] Emile Durkheim took a similar approach when he contrasted mechanical and organic social solidarity. His thesis was that the expansion of modernity has brought about the replacement of the older, mechanical form of social solidarity rooted in the collective conscience of traditional societies with organic solidarity based on the division of labour and presupposed functional interdependence based on difference.[32]

In Weber and Durkheim's theories, the shift of rationality or solidarity forms is understood as a catalyst that opens up social, economic and cultural possibilities but ushers in a plethora of problems that were previously undreamed of. This problem is particularly related to the process of secularization that occurred when religion underwent erosion and eradication as an institution in human society. Bryan Wilson (1982), one contemporary interpretator of Weber, argues that because religion has lost its social significance, the modern social system no longer has space for a concept of ultimate salvation. For every social problem, whether it has to do with economy, politics, law, education, family relations or recreation, the solutions proposed depend solely on technical expertise and bureaucratic organization. These contingencies occasionally force people to ask fundamental questions about meaning and purpose.[33]

While still equating modernity with rationality, contemporary social theorists have included critical reactions to the rise of this sort of rationality. Jürgen Habermas (1984), for instance, contends that rationalization consists of the development of greater moral insight, an enhanced ability to think critically about ethical life, and the universalization of moral values. He refers to this as

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[30] See Hans Antlov, *Exemplary Centre, Administrative Periphery: Rural Leadership and the New Order in Java* (London: Curzon Press, 1995), p. 28.

[31] Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, translated, edited and with an introduction by H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge, 1958), p. 51.

[32] Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1964), pp. 168-73.

[33] Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 47-8.

'communicative rationality'. His thesis is that the communicative rationality involves the creation of consensus formulated by participating equals, which allows people to be free from unnecessary social, natural and psychological constraints.[34] Habermas sees this form of rationality as a necessity in the modern, complex world in order to create a balance between the system and the lifeworld. The former refers to the economic and bureaucratic spheres of modern life responsible for the material reproduction of society, which is predominantly informed by instrumental rationality, and the latter corresponds to the realms of human interaction, such as family, friends and voluntary association. Yet, the balance is not perfect because, Habermas states, modern societies are threatened by modern world colonization of the lifeworld, when the system criteria associated with instrumental reason become part of everyday life. This happens as corporations take over more of people's leisure time, as consumerism runs rampant and undermines true free choice, and as the state intervenes and controls more of the lifeworld.[35]

The argument engendered by this form of rationality forms the basis for Habermas' idea of civil society. From his point of view, civil society represents a novel reality and a type of freedom unheard of in the past. It embodies subjective and principled freedom, which emphasizes the rational pursuit of self-interest, the equal right to participate in political decision-making and ethical autonomy and self-realization. This freedom arises from the struggle of civil society that encourages the rise of the public sphere, a realm of social life that allows private individuals to freely express and publish their opinions concerning various matters of general interest. Within this realm the issues bearing on the exercise of political power by the state can be discussed openly within the standards of rational and critical debate.[36] Of central importance to this notion is the existence of a vibrant public sphere that allows different voices to be heard in the context of egalitarian communication. The public sphere is highly necessary, particularly when contemporary societies and modern institutions fail to assure economic growth and political stability.[37]

When crisis was felt among different segments of Indonesian society, Islamic movements operating under the banner of the *Tarbiya* movement mentioned above offered a solution and set the stage for the increasing importance of Islam in Indonesian identity at the urban level and as a basis for organization. Through *halqas* and *dauras*, Islamic movements introduced a new view of Islam that emphasized the formalization of religious expressions and

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[34] Jurgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1, Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), p. 145.

[35] Jügen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 2, Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason* (Boston: Beacon, 1987), pp. 153-5.

[36] Jürgen Habermas, 'The Public Sphere', *New German Critique* 3 (1974), pp. 45-6.

[37] See Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1978), pp. 363-70.

provided a channel within which basic social and political questions could be articulated in a new way.

The need for this sort of alternative channel has continued to increase in tandem with the rapid process of globalization, a term used by scholars to refer to the creation and intensification of worldwide social relations that blur existing geographical, social and political boundaries, and in which a growing interdependence of a global whole and cross-cultural intervention are inescapable.[38] This process emerges as one of the most important factors that frequently effectuates the legitimation crisis occurring in many developing countries. The crux is that economic modernization in these countries has failed to adapt to or keep pace with the new conditions created by global competition and technological revolution. This problem is usually accompanied by the spread of social disorientation. As Arjun Appadurai (1995) has identified, the transnationalism set in motion by globalization has changed people's relations to space, and as a consequence many people face increasing difficulties in relating to, or indeed producing, 'locality' (as a structure of feeling, a property of life and an ideology of situated community). He goes on to argue that principally because of the force and form of electronic mediation between spatial and virtual neighbourhood, transnationalism causes the steady erosion of social relationships.[39]

Globalization can also be seen as having induced a new form of social organization based on an increasingly dense global network in which locality and identity are being swept away. Existing mechanisms of social control and political representation are thus disintegrated. As Manuel Castells (1997) puts it, the new form of social organization arising from globalization inevitably shakes institutions, transforms cultures, creates wealth and induces poverty, spurs greed, innovation and hope, and simultaneously imposes hardship and instills despair.[40] It is therefore not surprising that because of the expansion of globalization many people are apt to 'resent the loss of control over their lives, over their environment, over their jobs, over their economies, over their government, over their countries, and ultimately over their fate on the Earth'.[41]

Within this context, the influence of Islamic movements grew rapidly. Their messages articulated the dissatisfaction and frustration. Articulation of such feelings mainly took place in discussions when participants sought to understand and contextualize the thoughts of the main Islamist ideologues. They

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[38]As for the meaning of globalization, see Donatella Della Porta and Hanspeter Kriesi, 'Social Movements in a Globalizing World: an Introduction', in Donatella Della Porta, Hanspeter Kriesi and Dieter Rucht (eds.), *Social Movements in a Globalizing World* (London: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 3-4.

[39] Arjun Appadurai, 'The Production of Locality', in Richard Fardon (ed.), *Counterworks: Managing the Diversity of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 204-5.

[40] Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture,* Vol. II, *The Power of Identity,* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 1-2.

[41] Ibid., p. 69.

questioned their own fate while dreaming of the supremacy of an Islamic system. Of course, not all students were interested in participating. But a significant number dared to leave their main tasks as university students in order to devote themselves to the activities. One question needs to be raised here: Which segment of the university student population was most interested in the messages?

Shaken Identity

As we have noted, having benefited from the government programme of mass education, which has broadened the chances of the younger generation to receive a better education, many students coming from either small country towns and rural areas or from the urban lower middle classes have migrated to big cities to continue their studies at universities. In contrast to the students from the urban upper-middle class, those from rural areas have not received sufficient support from their families in the countryside to be able to cope with the heavy burdens of living as university students in the cities. Largely on their own, they have been required not only to bear academic burdens but also their basic living costs and tuition fees. Hampered by economic constraints, they have hardly been able to enjoy the 'real' campus life that has remained the prerogative of affluent students. Some have been forced to board in cramped quarters with limited facilities and located on narrow streets.

The attempt of these students to achieve social mobility by migrating to cities has been followed by many other village youths who do not have the opportunity to undertake university education. They come to find jobs, attracted by portrayals of cities disseminated by electronic media, notably television. In the cities they have taken on the resemblance of a new proletariat class trying their luck by working as factory labourers, petty traders, shopkeepers, tailors, or artisans. They have usually lived very simply because of their ambition of being able to transfer as much money as possible to their families in the countryside or to save for the future.

These two segments of newly urbanized youths who came from slightly different social backgrounds were easy targets for Islamic movements. By migrating to cities dominated by an urban setting unfriendly to them, these people have become detached from the community of their villages. This heightens their sensitivity to psychological shocks and their ability to deal with them. They have been used to living in a relatively easy manner within the bounds of a community whose members could easily communicate with one another. Kinship ties are particularly useful in providing solidarity and protection, and their ubiquitous presence means that problems are not carried on a single individual's shoulders but resolved collectively. In the cities they have been forced to live independently in relative isolation.

The reality of the cities is perhaps in sharp contrast to what they had dreamed of before arriving. They are forced to live in overcrowded urban areas

that the state has not had the power to organize either with respect to infrastructure or in terms of cultural or political structures. In many instances, cities expose the paradoxes of life mercilessly. Urban explosion means housing shortages and inadequate transportation, while the affluent live in luxurious houses and drive BMWs or other luxury cars. They are able to indulge in the blind mimicry of Western modes of dress and social behaviour without paying attention to the poor who struggle to meet their basic needs.

Cities entice by offering displays of unattainable modern luxuries in the shop windows of stores located in vast impersonal super- or hyper-markets. Expensive Western-style clothing, accessories, make-up, televisions, computers, motorcycles and cars are dangled every day before youths who had hitherto rarely dreamed of touching them. A few steps from the supermarkets, fast-food restaurants offer an American menu. The uneasiness caused by witnessing unattainable consumerism when their rural roots are attenuating has undoubtedly added an extra, bitter dimension to the problems faced in adjusting themselves to the new atmosphere of the city.

The paradoxical conditions that pervade the cities has disturbed the *habitus* of the newly urbanized youths. *Habitus* is a concept introduced by Pierre Bourdieu (1977) to refer to a 'system of durable, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of *perceptions, and actions* and makes possible the achievement of infinitely diversified tasks…' His argument is that people experience a particularly comfortable sense of place through sharing a *habitus*.[42] Craig Calhoun (1995) points out that one of the crucial features of *habitus* in traditional societies is that it radically limits the range of options available to rational actors. From his point of view, every increase in the range of options creates greater complexity and unpredictability for a person's decision-making, a circumstance which is antithetical to the maintenance of stable traditional patterns of social relations.[43]

Exacerbating the feeling of dispossession is the climate of widespread corruption, economic stagnation and bureaucratic incompetence. The government has seemingly failed to balance the supply and demand of employment, engendering rising competition in job markets. Consequently, the problems faced by the newly urbanized youths have been accumulating at a dizzying rate. Unbalanced relations between employers and employees often claim victims among workers; they can be easily fired without any proper compensation. To university students this overcharged job market has raised a worrying spectre about their future. They are haunted by the fact that many university graduates cannot easily find jobs. Indeed, because of extremely limited employment opportunities, the number of unemployed diploma holders

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[42] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 72.

[43] Craig Calhoun, *Critical Social Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 152.

increases each year. This problem is not confined to students of social sciences but is likewise prevalent among those of scientific and engineering fields.

The new urban life, dominated by the accoutrements of advanced capitalism, has marginalized some segments of society, particularly those whose hopes have been blown out of proportion by the promises of development repeatedly voiced by the government. Their resulting disorientation makes them sensitive to genuine social crisis, to use Habermas' term, which disturbs two independent levels of societal integration: system integration and social integration. System integration refers to the technical challenge of meeting the material needs of survival and social reproduction through work and production. Social integration refers to the practical challenge of providing normative order, stable social identities and symbolic meaning and purpose in the lifeworld. The former has to do with the systems and institutions in which speaking and acting subjects are socially related; the latter is associated with the lifeworlds that are symbolically structured.[44]

Habermas' concept of the lifeworld's colonization adds a dimension to the explanation about this dynamic. His colonization thesis envisions system imperatives imposing the generalized media of money and power on a cultural lifeworld of symbolic meanings, cultural traditions and socialization patterns. The result is that intrapersonal and interpersonal foundations of identity consciousness and social interactions are distorted and detached from their communicative foundation.[45] This theory is criticized by Craig Calhoun (1995) as idealizing the lifeworld and criticizing the system too much. Calhoun sees no sharp demarcation between the lifeworld and the system, and the divergent ways of people's understanding of the social world are simply determined by their experience in modern life.[46]

What is clear in Habermas' theory is that while in a traditional society identity is granted once, and is therefore fixed, timeless and immutable, in a modern, global society identity can be gained and lost, depending on individual volition and accomplishment. In a nutshell, identity has undergone relativization. As a consequence, new social movements have arisen in different parts of the world, providing avenues for the development of new values and identities, as well as novel interpretations of social life, and these then represent the main vehicles by which communicative rationality can be brought into public life. Habermas argues, the rise of new social movements has to do with the struggle to define relationships in the context of the emergence of new forms of instrumental and communicative knowledge as well as of economic and social changes.[47]

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[44] Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), pp. 2-5.
[45] Habermas (1984), pp. 341-2.
[46] Calhoun (1995), p. 207.
[47] Habermas (1987), pp. 391-396.

In the modern, global society, the relativization of identity can undermine the more conventional anchors of social life that provide a measure of stability, and this makes the quest for individual identity a central pursuit of modern life. As a source of meaning for social actors, identity organizes the meaning in the way that the purpose of certain actions is symbolically identified. Alberto Melucci (1989) refers to the relativization of identity as the 'homelessness of personal identity', and to him,

> 'The pace of social change, the plurality of memberships, and the abundance of possibilities and messages thrust upon the individual all serve to weaken the traditional points of reference (church, party, race, class) on which identity is based. The possibility that an individual will say with conviction and continuity "I am x, y, or z" becomes increasingly uncertain. The need to reestablish continually *who I am* and what it is that assures the continuity of my biography becomes stronger. A "homelessness" of personal identity is created, such that the individual must build and rebuild constantly his or her "home" in the face of changing situations and events'.[48]

The importance of identity in the global, modern society has also been emphasized by Castells, suggesting that identity has become a driving force in contemporary world history, which has been shaped by the conflicting trends of globalization. He distinguishes three forms of identity:

1. Legitimizing identity is conferred or withheld by dominant institutions such as the state, thereby rationalizing privilege, domination and assimilation into and exclusion from the nation;
2. Resistance identity normally 'generated by those actors that are in position devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination'.
3. Project identity is generated by cosmopolitan social movements attempting to build new identities by redefining their position in global society to transform dominant structures such as patriarchy or capitalist productivism.[49]

In dividing these forms of identity, Castells is particularly concerned with collective identity among individuals and how it is being formed in resistance to globalization and the rise of network societies. Naturally, identities that begin as resistance may induce projects and, in the course of history, may also become dominant. He goes on to argue that legitimizing identity may encourage the rise of 'civil society' because it brings together the apparatuses

[48] Alberto Melucci, *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society* (London: Hutchinson, 1989), p. 109.
[49] Castells (1999), p. 8.

that actually prolong the dynamics of the state. In contrast, resistance identity leads to the formation of communities in which forms of collective resistance are built against otherwise unbearable oppression. This form of identity can in turn become a project identity aimed at transforming society through collective action against a dominant identity.[50]

As Castells sees it, the need to construct identity shaken by the swift current of social change encourages global, modern people to return to a primary identity constructed by working on 'traditional materials in the formation of a new godly, communal world, where deprived masses and disaffected intellectuals may reconstruct meaning in a global alternative to the exclusionary global order'. By doing so, they challenge a globalized, homogenized 'McWorld' identity that esteems the ideology of individualism and the capacity for material consumption. From his point of view, the manifestations of religious fundamentalism across the world are reflections of a surge of widespread expressions on behalf of cultural singularity.[51]

Enclave

In the recent contribution of Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby and Emmanuel Sivan (2003), the call to return to primary identity is noted as the main agenda proposed by diverse (Christian, Islam and Jewish) contemporary religious fundamentalist movements. These authors make use of the term 'enclave' as an apt metaphor for the call and emphasize it as 'the primary impulse that lies behind the rise of the tradition so as to forestall the danger of being sucked into the vortex of modernity'.[52] They suggest that in the so-called 'enclave culture' fundamentalists usually construct a 'wall of virtue' based on moral values. This wall separates the saved, free and morally superior enclave from the hitherto tempting central community. The enclave places the oppressive and morally defiled outside society, perceived to have lived in a polluted, contagious and dangerous area, in sharp contrast to the community of virtuous insiders.[53]

Enclave is related to the question of space in its symbolic and social meanings. It is a separate space in which individual members conform to homogeneous public norms. In this respect, behaviour, language and dress codes are strictly regulated and serve as the main distinguishing marks from the outside society. Strictness is aimed at dictating a semblance of order because of the gravity of danger imposed by the outside. Here lies the importance of

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[50] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[51] Ibid., p. 20.

[52] Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, and Emmanuel Sivan, *Strong Religion, The Rise of Fundamentalism around the World* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 30.

[53] Ibid., pp. 33-7.

authority: a guide that steers individual members.[54] To these authors, 'the end product of the imposition of fundamentalist norms is a strong claim on individual members' "operational time" as lived as a group (not individual resource)'.[55]

In the case of the Salafi movement the attempt to impose a strict, exclusive pattern of life appears primarily in the tendency of the movement's members to set themselves distinctly apart from the society around them. They are convinced that a pure Islamic community free from the stains of the modern world should be established if the triumph of Islam is to be revived. Within this exclusive system they adopt a distinctive pattern of behaviour, language, dress and social relationships. In the language of a Salafi *ustāz*, the pattern of behaviour, language and dress is something determinant and fixed:

> 'Whether someone is a true believer or not can be seen from his behaviour, language and dress. A faithful Muslim must behave like the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*, speak in the language of the Qur'an and the Sunna and wear Islamic dress such as *jalabiyya* in order to distinguish himself from infidels. *Man tashabbahā bi qawm fa huwa minhum* (Whoever resembles a [infidel] group, he belongs to that group)'.[56]

While emphasizing adherence to a distinctive faith, morality and lifestyle, the movement condemns deviance, shuns dissenters and repudiates the outside world. They argue that the outside is the *jāhiliyya* world full of *shirk* and *bid'a*.

In order to follow this exclusive pattern of life, members are demanded to sacrifice, not only leaving pleasures and opportunities but also taking a risk of suffering from social stigma. In place of western-style shirts or trendy blouses, for instance, they should wear robes or *niqāb*. Young men are even obliged to let their beards grow long messily. At the same time, they are subject to numerous restrictions; they are not allowed to smoke, watch television or listen to music. In line with their increasingly close attachment to the movement, their contacts with family and friends are minimized. They are forced to devote their time, energy and even lives solely to the interests of the movement. These all sound irrational, costly and unproductive. Nevertheless, the cohesiveness of the movement always seems strong. Members remain active and fully committed to myriad activities organized by the movement and new followers join.

Utilizing an economic-rational model, Iannaccone (1992) proposes a thesis that the key success of strict religious organizations in maintaining the loyalty of followers is determined by the willingness of the followers to gain rewards for high costs of participation. These costs can overcome the free-rider problems associated with collective action and screen out people whose

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[54] Ibid., pp. 46-50.
[55] *Ibid*., p. 52.
[56] Interview with Muhammad Ihsan, Yogyakarta, 31 December 2002.

participation otherwise would be marginal, while at the same time increasing participation among those who remain. The level of participation and the level of sacrifice are thus correlated. As a logical consequence, the utility of movement members can increase when apparently unproductive sacrifices are required. Ironically, unproductive sacrifice itself makes the organization attractive. Here the law of market economics is an effect; the more scarce (and consequently more difficult to get) a commodity, the more attractive it is and the more people want to have it. Iannaccone concludes that religious groups that demand sacrifice and stigma should display fundamental behavioural similarities independent of their differences in history, theology and organization, and in so doing, they limit participation in competing activities.[57]

Elaborating on this thesis, Iannaccone, in work cited earlier, argues that successful strictness must involve the sacrifice of external (non-group) resources and opportunities that the group can itself replace. In other words, a group can afford to prohibit or put out of reach only those commodities for which it offers a close substitute. Through these substitute commodities, members of the group can therefore enjoy the benefits of their participation and forget their sacrifices. He insists that arbitrary strictness will fail just as surely as excessive strictness. In this sense, cults and communes that isolate members geographically, for instance, must provide an internal productive economy based on farming, manufacture and trade, or the like. Likewise, sects that isolate their members socially must provide alternative social networks with ample opportunities for interactions, friendships and status.[58]

It should be noted, however, that by focusing on an attempt to seek a rational explanation about the factors that urge some people to retain their committed participation in a strict religious organization whatever the costs they should pay, Iannaccone leaves the roots of the problem unanswered. One's decision to join a strict religious organization is certainly not spontaneous but the result of a long process of 'negotiation'. In order to cope with this, we should come back to the issue of identity, which turns on the interrelated problems of self-recognition and recognition by others. Recognition is vital to any reflexivity, for example, any capacity to look at oneself, to choose one's actions and see their consequences, and to hope to make oneself something more or better than one is. This component of recognition may be the aspect of identity made most problematic by the social changes of modernity.

The emphasis on a distinctive lifestyle in the enclave culture is clearly associated with the problem of identity. When one feels that his identity is shaken, he needs to consolidate the identity. This can be done by, for instance, joining a particular, exclusive movement. In such a movement the pride of being different is emphasized and a sense of certainty is reached. Certainty is

[57] Laurence R. Iannaccone, 'Sacrifice and Stigma: Reducing Free-Riding in Cults, Communes, and Other Collectives', *Journal of Political Economy* 100: 2 (1992), pp. 271-91.

[58] Iannaccone (1994), pp. 1203-4.

particularly crucial for the consolidation of identity shaken by the excesses of modernization and globalization. There is no surprise that the impulse to seek certainty lies always behind one's consent to sacrifice and suffer from social stigma.

In the case of the Salafis associated with Laskar Jihad, the certainty is apparent in the way they organize their lives. The collectivity they offer is appealing, as they emphasize the need to gather at every opportunity, particularly at the prayer times. They usually wake up early in the morning and soon after take a bath. They then go to a mosque, or *muṣalla*, to perform a morning prayer collectively. The *muṣalla* does not always belong to them. In many instances, they symbolically take control over a *muṣalla* where they live and make it the centre of all their activities. This modus automatically expels indigenous people to the sidelines. After morning prayer, they usually listen to a *ta'līm*, religious lecture.

Around eight o'clock in the morning they embark on productive activities. Most of them work in small-scale trading. They may sell rice, vegetable oil, vegetables, honey, books, lamps, cakes, alcohol-free perfume and Islamic garments, some of which are the products of cottage-industry. As long as a certain commodity is sold by a member, other members of the enclave will not try to purchase it outside. They usually have their own purlieus of steady costumers to whom the commodities are offered. This productive activity is only carried on for a few hours. One hour before the noon prayer, they go home and straightaway prepare themselves to go to the *muṣalla*. After the noon prayer some of them continue their productive activities until the afternoon prayer. Towards the afternoon prayer they go back to the *muṣalla* to perform the prayer, which is usually followed by a *ta'lim*. As darkness approaches, they gather in the *muṣalla* to perform the sunset prayer. Some remain there until they finish performing the evening prayer.

A sense of certainty is also applied in terms of pairing. It is suggested to those who feel ready to get married to go to their *ustāz* to tell him of their intentions. Usually, the *ustāz* will give his wife(s) the task of finding a girl ready for marriage. Through the mediation of the *ustāz* and his wife(s), a meeting (*naḍar*) between the future bride and bridegroom is arranged. At that meeting the would-be bride is allowed to see the face of the would-be bridegroom in the presence of their mediators. The marriage contract will be drawn up soon after an agreement is reached between the two parties. They just come to the *ustāz* to declare the marriage contract in the presence of several dozens Salafis. Economic self-sufficiency is not required at all. As long as the future bride feels prepared mentally, the marriage can take place soon.[59] The *ustāz* feels sinful if he fails to find a partner for a would-be marriage candidate. In normal cases, a young man who wants to get married is demanded to have certain economic-

[59] Interview with Abu Sulaiman, Yogyakarta, 18 December 2002.

sufficiency, or at least to have enough money to pay for the dowry and wedding party.

This new couple normally hopes to have a baby as soon as possible. They do not accept the idea of family planning, which they perceive as a strategy of infidels to weaken manpower among Muslims. As soon as the first son or daughter is born, they will seek to have the second one and then the third and so on. In general their ambition is to have as many children as possible. These children will grow up in the enclave and be protected from influences from the outside. They will be taught how to live as Salafis and be sent to Islamic teaching centres that belong to Salafis themselves. From their perspective, to send children to the centres gives multiple benefits; the children can understand Islamic teachings properly and comprehensively, and at the same time, comprehend the meaning to live as dedicated Salafis. More important, they argue that the centres do not require them to pay myriad forms of contribution, as happened in public or private schools.[60]

In search of security, women do not hesitate to be the second or the third or even the fourth wife of a Salafi man. This seems to be a rational choice for them because to find a good man who understands their 'position' is not an easy task. In the meantime, to come back to their own families in the countryside, hoping that they will receive an assistance to find a spouse, is equally complicated, because they have positioned themselves on a different status with their families. Consequently, they should seek a solution on their own. Polygamy is thus very common among the Salafis. In certain cases, the first wife of a Salafi man will look for a girl to be the second wife of her husband. Both wives usually maintain a close relationship with each other. A dozen polygamous Salafis boast that they do not have any problems in having more than one wife. Instead, this brings them social and economic benefits. They claim that with two, three or four wives they can produce many descendants and, at the same time, share economic burdens. A polygamous Salafi who works as garment peddler is proud of saying that with his having three wives the production of his garments has increased significantly.[61]

Enclave limits options on the basis of the contrast constructed between the saved inside and the damned outside. Since evil is considered to be inherent in the outside, the Salafis are forced to cease to think about the miscellaneous temptations from this dangerous area. Radios, tape-recorders and televisions are consequently forbidden, as noted in the previous chapter. These things are thought to be able to lure Muslims away from the straight path of Islam. This holds true for the case of wearing *jalabiyya*. They argue that by wearing *jalabiyya* they are automatically freed from committing sinful acts. A Salafi man asserted, 'When I wear *jalabiyya*, I could not possibly think to enter cinema. If I

[60] Interviews with Yahya Abu Salih and Ja'far Abu Hafsah, Yogyakarta, 5 January 2003.
[61] Interview with Marwan Abu Ishaq, Yogyakarta, 3 January 2003.

did so, everybody would look at me and laugh at me. The *jalabiyya* therefore functions to protect me from sinful acts'.[62] For women, living in an enclave entails considerable sacrifices, as the enclave requires them to wear the *niqāb*. They are at least freed from the needs to buy trendy expensive blouses, skirts and make-up.

The closed pattern of social interaction reinforces the limitation of options of the people living in an enclave. They tend to limit contacts with people outside. They are usually not involved in various social activities in the village where they live. According to villagers living near a Salafi enclave, they hardly ever see Salafis at village meetings, helping in social services or communal feasts. They even show some reluctance just to say hello to the villagers. This reluctance often stirs up tension with the villagers, who feel that the Salafis are inclined to be closed and arrogant, and keep distant from them. This tension sometimes breaks out into an open conflict, as once occurred in the veterans' complex in Yogyakarta.

Since women are thought to be the weakest point in the defence of boundaries with the outside, the enclave imposes strict seclusion on them. On the basis of the doctrine of *ikhṭilāt* (mingling between men and women), they are secluded from the sphere of men and are only allowed to have contact with males in the presence of their husbands or of *maḥram*, close relatives with whom they are not allowed to marry. If there is a visitor, they will not open the door of their houses without the presence of their husbands. They only answer from inside their houses to make sure whether the guest is male or female. As soon as they know that the guest is male they will not give any reaction. Even in the presence of their husband, it is not easy for a male guest to have contact with them. The guest will only receive a cup of tea from behind partition.

It is plausible to say that among the Salafis the public sphere belongs only to men. Women are usually preoccupied with domestic affairs, such as taking care of children. It is thought best to give them tasks like teaching children to read the Qur'an on certain days in the *muṣalla*. If women help the productive activities of their husbands, by, say, sewing or needlework, they will do so from behind a partition. They are just a cog in the wheel and the real activity is regarded as a male prerogative. Women's bodies are therefore under the control of men. At *ta'līm* or religious gatherings they occupy a separate space behind the men. There is no doubt that enclave reinforces a hegemonic masculinity, a configuration of gender practice that embodies the currently acceptable answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.[63]

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[62] Interview with Muhammad Ismail, Jakarta, 27 October 2001.

[63] See Murray Knuttila, 'Lean and Mean: Hegemonic Masculinity as Fundamentalism', in Carol Schick et al., (eds.), *Contesting Fundamentalisms* (Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 2004), pp. 91-104.

Alternative System?

It is not clear whether this sort of enclave can be perceived as an alternative ideational system that affirms the non-separation of the religious, legal and political spheres. Can it be understood as an all-encompassing system that governs the political, economic, social and cultural aspects of society? Is it sufficient to replace the system of secular nation-state claimed by Islamists all over the world to have served the ideals of the dominant world powers, rather than the ideological, political or economic interests of Muslims? These are the questions to be tackled in the rest of this chapter.

In contrast to Islamism that explicitly conceives of Islam as a religion, a political ideology, an economic system and a social order, the enclave does not have a particular political agenda. Nor does it have a specific programme of action. What it pursues is apparently mere rhetoric. In the shadow of diverse complexities of regulations demonstrated by the contemporary global world, for instance, it implements simplicity; in the face of the domination of modern luxuries advertised by the windows of economic capitalism, it offers sobriety; in the face of the triumph of secular political powers, it relies on traditional authority; and within the grandeur of the world's pluralism, it maintains exclusiveness.

What is clear is that the enclave has emerged as a domain in which a resistance identity is created opposing state control and the domination of the state business and the corporate sector imposed by the currents of modernization and globalization. In the face of the global hegemonic world order, this resistance is not organized openly but through discourses, symbols and everyday practices. The life in the enclave reflects 'everyday forms' of resistance against disempowerment, which, according to James C. Scott (1985), are critical to, and perhaps the most significant form of, class struggle. He sees this form of resistance as intentional, non-intentional, individual, coordinated and in fact anything members or subordinate groups do to rely themselves:

> 'When the poor symbolically undermine the self-awarded status of the rich by inventing nicknames, by malicious gossip, by boycotting their feasts, by blaming their greed and stinginess for the current state of affairs, they are simultaneously asserting their own claim to status. Even when, as frequently happens, a poor family holds a feast they can ill afford. It is a small but significant sign of their determination not to accept the cultural marginalization their scant means imply'.[64]

The enclave emerges as an answer given by marginalized people whose social mobility is clogged by the power of the global world that continuously

[64] J.C. Scott, *Weapon of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 240.

imposes its colonization nets upon every aspect of societal life. It facilitates an attempt to regain control over the world, so that a process of empowerment is reinforced. But this attempt is made by limiting the area of control. A firm wall of virtue is created to delimit the area of control. Within its borders the members of an enclave build a new life. They believe that the outside is completely susceptible to material and social temptations. Hence, the enclave can be expected to be quite rigid in defence of its boundaries. As Castells (1983) argues, 'when people find themselves unable to control the world, they simply shrink the world to the size of their community'.[65]

By resisting the existing order from within communal boundaries it creates by itself, the enclave transforms the position of the individual members from local into global subjects or from local spectators into global actors. In this respect, subjects are no longer individuals but the collective social actors through which individuals reach the holistic meaning in their experience. They are seemingly wrestling for control not over 'reins of power' but over the process of determining meaning. This is the tendency called by Castells 'the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded'.[66]

Nevertheless, the enclave is by no means fatalistic. It might be better to conceive of it as a form of struggle for, rather than as a rejection of, modernity. In Paul Lubeck's terms (2000), it is an attempt to pursue an alternative route to modernity.[67] That is why it accepts certain aspects of modernity. Therefore it is not surprising to come across those who live in an enclave use mobile phones, motorcycles and cars. They believe that these vehicles are useful tools for supporting activities committed to the glory of the enclave. Similarly, a computer is not considered a taboo. It is a tool that can help them conduct the resistance, since it is the primary means of publishing pamphlets, bulletins and magazines containing salvation messages from within the enclave.

While ambivalence in these matters, the enclave explicitly rejects the domination of the West. Its criticism is particularly addressed to the secular system—political, economic, social or cultural—since it is viewed as a system imposed by the West. It claims that this system has generated a society that is brutal, sadistic and licentious. To the members of the enclave, the way to escape this disaster is *sharīʻa* and nothing but *sharīʻa,* whose implementation will bring stability, morality and prosperity. *Sharīʻa* is, thus, seen as an alternative and a solution to the crisis and is believed capable of creating a fair and prosperous society.

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[65] Manuel Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban, Social Movements* (Berkeley: University California Press, 1983), p. 331.

[66] Castells, 1999, p. 9.

[67] Paul M. Lubeck, 'The Islamic Revival, Antinomies of Islamic Movements under Globalization', in Robin Cohen and Shirin M. Rai, *Global Social Movements* (London: The Athlone Press, 2000), pp. 150-1.

The repudiation of the West constitutes a common thread running through various Islamist movements that have emerged in the contemporary Muslim world. According to Bobby S. Sayyid (1997), this problem is rooted in the fact that the failure of ruling regimes in the Muslim world has been very much identical to that of the West. When the regimes came to power, they swept away traditions by identifying them with ignorance, backwardness and poverty. They were instead in favour of the West, which they identified with progress and prosperity.[68] When the modernization they initiated stumbled and failed to achieve the promised economic development, society's alienation and dependency deepened[69] and the West became the target of the anger, particularly of the groups that had been previously excluded or were promised what was never given.

Nevertheless, the walls of Western hegemony seem too strong to be challenged. Ruling regimes that positioned themselves as the dedicated collaborators of the West are still in place. When they are replaced, their successors usually come from their own camp because of the stagnation of the aspirations of all others under the hegemony of the state. The system of capitalist economics they introduced has continued its domination, pushing the remaining traditional economic actors aside. The Western-style consumerism implanted by this capitalist economic system has rapidly expanded to change the lifestyle of the people who are in a position to enjoy the benefits of development. The frustration arising from an inability to adjust to all these developments provides fertile ground for the growth of the enclave. It emerges as a means of legitimizing the frustration of deprived people.

In this context, jihad emerges as the concept whose symbols and discourses can be used to express anger. Its use reflects their impotence in the face of uncertainty arising from modernization and globalization sponsored by the ruling regimes backed up by the war machines imported from the West. As Benjamin Barber (1995) puts it, jihad in its most elemental form is a kind of animal fear propelled by anxiety in the face of uncertainty and relieved by self-sacrificing zealotry—an escape from history. Using the term 'McWorld' as a metaphor for a globalizing world that he equates with the history of individualization, acquisitiveness, secularization, aggressiveness, atomization and immoralism, Barber says:

> 'Jihad tends the soul that McWorld abjures and strives for moral well-being that McWorld, busy with the consumer choices it mistakes for freedom, disdains. Jihad thus goes to war with

[68] Bobby S. Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear, Eurocentrism and the Emergence of Islamism* (London: Zed Book, 1997), p. 158.

[69] Bryan S. Turner, 'Politics and Culture in Islamic Globalism', in Bryan S. Turner, *Islam: Critical Concepts in Sociology, Vol. IV, Islam and Social Movements* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 84-102.

> McWorld and, because each worries the other will obstruct and ultimately thwart the realization of its ends, the war between them becomes a holy war. The lines here are drawn not in sand but in stone'.[70]

These people consider jihad an appropriate choice since they believe that McWorld continues to demonstrate its vanity in full view of their frustration. By glorifying the symbols of jihad, they are in fact trying to resist their own impotence and frustration, and thereby gain their identity and dignity. The zeal of purity and martyrdom is significant in fuelling and completing their struggle.

For these people, the desire to resist McWorld will continue to burn bright as long as the frustration does not transform into a privilege. This resistance will oscillate between two poles: enclave and jihad. The former is implicit and the latter is explicit. Under certain favourable political situations an implicit resistance in the form of an enclave can resort to an explicit one in the form of jihad. In contrast to the enclave, jihad can transform marginality into centrality and defeat to become patriotism. But it should be noted that these all remain predominantly rhetorical. Global hegemonic war machines will be able to seize upon the iron swords drawn in jihad and polished with the slogan of 'La ilāha illa Allāh'.

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[70] Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld* (New York: Times Books, 1995), p. 215.

CHAPTER VII
THE DRAMA OF JIHAD IN THE MOLUCCAN CONFLICT

The irruption of thousands of Laskar Jihad fighters in Senayan Main Stadium in Jakarta on 6 April 2000 surprised the majority of Indonesians. Battalions of *jalabiyya*-wearing young men with swords on proud display had come to the capital to proclaim their determination to wage jihad in the Spice Islands of the Moluccas. More surprising was that these fighters were bearded youths who had hitherto seemed closed and idle to whatever happened outside their exclusive domains of life in enclave. While some people welcomed these fighters with enthusiasm, sharing the spirit to combat the 'enemies of Islam', most were shocked and worried that it was a sign of the proliferation of religious radicalism that would raise seeds of hostility among different religious communities.

Laskar Jihad fighters gathered in the heat to stage a spectacular collective action that presented itself majestically: a sea of swarming, writhing people clad in white, absorbed in chants of '*Allah Akbar*' whose echoes reverberated throughout the stadium. Sunlight flashed from their swords like strobe lights. In the background banners and posters fluttered magnificently, emblazoned with the slogans 'Wage *jihād fī sabīl Allāh*' and 'Defend Muslims in the Moluccas', the finishing touch to an atmosphere of jihad. At the height of his public exposure, Ja'far Umar Thalib mounted the podium and delivered an oration in which he decried the 'disaster' afflicting Moluccan Muslims, confronted as they were by a genocidal threat. He proclaimed the year 2000 the year of jihad and openly stated his determination to mobilize his fighters.

From the Senayan Stadium, Laskar Jihad fighters marched to the parliament building to meet with the parliamentary spokesman and his deputies. Still unsatisfied, they staged a demonstration in front of the presidential palace and called on the government to intervene in the Moluccas and restore social order. Accompanied by leaders of the Moluccan Muslims, including Rustam Kastor, Ali Fauzy and Abu Bakar Wahid al-Banjari, three representatives of Laskar Jihad, Ja'far Umar Thalib, Ayip Syafruddin and Ma'ruf Bahrun, met President Abdurrahman Wahid. Face to face with Wahid, they blatantly criticized for his 'indifference' to the fate of Muslims in the Moluccas and his tendency to side with Christians. They even blamed Wahid for having supported

the revival of Communism. The meeting came to an abrupt end after Wahid had them thrown out of his office.[1]

Subsequently, Laskar Jihad fighters marched to Kampung Munjul-Tanah Sareal, Bogor, to the south of Jakarta, to undergo paramilitary training under the rubric of the 'National United Training' (*Latihan Gabungan Nasional*). This term is usually used by the Indonesian Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI) to refer to a large scale military training. They set up their base on a seven-hectare plot belonging to al-Irsyad, around which banners reading 'Laskar Jihad Fighters Training for Combat' were scattered. Some 3,000 participants committed themselves to physical fitness and learning commando tactics, survival techniques and self-defence. As mentioned earlier, they were trained by former members of university student regiments and veterans of the Afghan, Moro and Kashmir Wars. A number of witnesses have testified that this training even involved some military personnel.[2]

Surprisingly, although the police claimed to have barricaded the area, they took no significant action to break up the training. Drawing his own conclusion, Abdurrahman Wahid, through the then Minister of Religious Affairs, Mochammad Tolchah Hasan, eventually issued an unequivocal order to the police to take any action necessary to halt Laskar Jihad's mission. He even took the unprecedented step of stating that he would prevent Laskar Jihad from entering any part of the Moluccan islands.[3] Under police pressure, Laskar Jihad called the training off on the tenth day, one week earlier than scheduled. Before heading for the organization's headquarters in Yogyakarta, members handed in nearly 500 weapons to the police. Despite the early break up, Ja'far Umar Thalib insisted he would go ahead with plans to deploy 10,000 fighters in the Moluccas, whatever the risks, and sent his fighters home with a single standing order burning in their minds.[4]

Assiduous in his preparations, Ja'far Umar Thalib decided to send an investigation team on a mission to survey and map the areas of conflict, indicating the latest position of Muslims in the islands and to prepare for the arrival of Laskar Jihad fighters. This team eventually arrived in Ambon. At Port Slamet Ryadi, one member of the mission recounted, they were enthusiastically welcomed by military men, who greeted them with the words, 'Welcome to the jihad battlefield', and they were immediately provided with a number of

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[1] This event was reported by various mass media. See 'Enam Wakil Laskar Jihad Bertemu Presiden', *Kompas*, 7 April 2000; and 'Menunggu Delapan Mata Mau Semeja di Jakarta', *Gamma*, (12 April 2000), pp. 24-6.

[2] Interview with a dozen Laskar Jihad lieutenants in December 2000. See also 'Peta Baru Siasat Islam', *Gamma* (19 April 2000), pp. 28-9.

[3] Wahid even threatened to mobilize the *Barisan Serba Guna Nahdhatul Ulama* (Multi-Purposes Force of the Nahdhatul Ulama) to hinder the departure of Laskar Jihad if the TNI and Indonesian Police would not take necessary steps.

[4] Interview with Muhammad Umar as-Sewed, Yogyakarta, 19 December 2002.

standard military weapons including AK 47s and SS 14s.[5] The success of this mission apparently convinced Laskar Jihad that its struggle to rescue Muslims in the Moluccas should push ahead.

On 26 April 2000, 111 Laskar Jihad fighters left Port Tanjung Perak in Surabaya. Four days later they arrived in Ambon. Their arrival was followed by those of hundreds of other fighters who left from both Port Tanjung Perak in Surabaya and Port Tanjung Priok in Jakarta. In May, four ships transported around 800 fighters of Laskar Jihad. The arrival of almost 1,000 fighters during April and May was then followed by thousands of other fighters in the following months. In July, Laskar Jihad had recorded almost 3,000 fighters stationed in a dozen command posts on the island of Ambon. This number remained fairly constant with new fighters coming to the islands to replace those returning home. The total number of Laskar Jihad fighters deployed to the islands reached approximately 7,000.[6]

The Theatrical Dimension of the Mission

As I shall demonstrate, Laskar Jihad's mission in the Moluccas can be conceptualized as a drama, because this apparently frenzied action was motivated not so much by the hope for a resounding victory as by fabricating a heroic image. This process began with the spectacular gathering at the Senayan Stadium, a strategic and prestigious site close to the political and business centres. Through the media millions of Indonesians watched participants shout, cry and laugh together, displaying their determination and capacity to defend the Moluccan Muslims from the attacks of Christian enemies. There was near-hysteria. They wished to hypnotize the public by using the symbols of jihad. In so doing, they conveyed an image as the group most committed to defending Islam and the Muslim *umma*.

The jihad action in the Moluccas was the moment the Salafis proclaimed their rightful place in the political arena of Indonesia. This action had important implications for them, especially for the contestation of the Indonesian public sphere. Capitalizing on the rapid spread of their influence, the Salafis demanded greater acceptance within the political sphere. This demand was not easily realized because of their lack of support among Indonesian Muslims. They remained in a marginalized position. It is no exaggeration to suggest that the jihad action of Laskar Jihad was part of the politics of recognition pursued by Indonesian Salafis, an attempt to enhance their identity and thereby negotiate a place on the map of Indonesian Islam.

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[5] Interview with a member of the team, Jakarta, 9 December 2000.
[6] Interview with Ayip Syafruddin, Solo, 27 December 2003.

Figure XII: Laskar Jihad fighters in the *tabligh akbar* in Senayan Main Stadium in Jakarta on 6 April 2000 (Courtesy of *Tempo*, 20 May 2001).

Through the staging of theatrical scenes presented after its first appearance in the Senayan Stadium, Laskar Jihad undeniably emerged on the scene as a bunch of militant youths willing to martyr themselves for the cause of God. Wearing the distinctive uniform of the Salafis (white *jalabiyya* and turban) complete with arms on proud display, they portrayed themselves as the most heroic jihad combatants, aching to go to the frontlines. They acted as if they were regular soldiers who had been ordered to secure their nation and religion. Behind this appearance lay an ambition to demonstrate in the face of powerful opponents a hitherto marginalized power and to challenge the hegemonic global order.

Laskar Jihad fighters cast themselves as figures, as heroes or villains striving for some grand ideal or destiny. They followed a plot that foreshadowed a happy or tragic ending. This plot might have been written beforehand or improvised, crystallizing only after the drama was underway. All this is of little account if there is not a public to side with the play's main character determining the destiny of society. The performance was in fact a message conveyed through symbols, signs, and signals, by which the goal of an individual or a group is reached. Victor Turner (1974) argues that because social drama takes place in a conflict situation, it functions mainly as an arena where loyalty and obligation are stressed as much as interest, and the course of events may turn out to have a tragic quality.[7]

[7] Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1974), pp. 33-9.

Figure XIII: Laskar Jihad fighters in front of MPR headquarters in Senayan Jakarta (Courtesy of *Tempo*, 20 May 2001).

The main actor in this drama was no doubt Ja'far Umar Thalib, the commander-in-chief of Laskar Jihad, himself a sign among signs. But it was the drama of jihad that created him, raised him from the ranks of a modest Salafi *ustāz* to an icon of jihad, for without this drama the image of hero could never have taken form. Yet the impression left on the world was dependent upon the the combined political loyalties necessary to stage him as such. Mobilizing men was thus his primary task, the capacity upon which supremacy depended. The flow of fighters from various provinces in Indonesia, who came to proclaim their support for this action, was in turn of significance not only to strengthen his position as the icon of jihad but also to facilitate steps towards claiming central leadership among Indonesian Muslims.

The Moluccan province constituted the primary stage on which Laskar Jihad fighters acted out their drama. This stage is located in the huge theatre building called the Republic of Indonesia, where the New Order had successfully managed political power by expertly using symbols and state rituals for more than thirty-two years. As described by Clifford Geertz (1980) in the case of nineteenth-century Bali, in a theatre state political symbology—from myth, insignia and etiquette to palaces, titles and ceremonies—is the instrument of purposes concealed behind it. Its relations to the real business of politics are therefore all extrinsic. But the isomorphic aspects of 'practical' instrumental

politics and expressive actions cannot be isolated from the exercise of power itself.[8]

As players in a drama, Laskar Jihad fighters acted intentionally to capture public attention. They enjoyed the coverage in the media, including television, radio, newspapers, bulletins and magazines, although their underpinning doctrine did not allow them to do so. They warmly welcomed reporters from the media who used the event (and at times sensationalized it) to sell their publications. For Laskar Jihad fighters this dramatic enactment thus meant control over the means of symbolic production. As a drama it was rife with scenes of victory and loss. Happiness and sadness were blurred into scenes of jihad that exerted emotional effects on the audience. Yet the plot remained dependent on the socio-political setting that constituted its background. Changes to this setting would determine the plot's sustainability.

Figure XIV: The united paramilitary training in Bogor, West Java, involving some military personnel (Courtesy of *Tempo*, 20 May 2001).

The Road to the Moluccas

It is hard to envisage that this kind of drama could happen in a sovereign state without facing a significant challenge, if not outright repression, from the agents

[8] Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 122-3.

of the state. But the jihad actions of Laskar Jihad demonstrated that this ordinary logic did not make any sense. In fact, it had no trouble dispatching thousands of its fighters into the fray of the Moluccas. There is even one very interesting fact about the Laskar Jihad fighters' journey to the Moluccas. A dozen of them stated that they left for their destination on the same ships carrying military personnel of the Kodam Siliwangi and the Kodam Brawijaya from West and East Java, respectively. These fighters claimed not only to have chatted and joked with the military personnel during the voyage, but also to have enjoyed a warm welcome by military officers of the Kodam Pattimura who picked up their military colleagues in Port Slamet Ryadi.[9]

It is apparent that the success of Laskar Jihad's departures was determined by the backing of the military, the party responsible for 'securing' Indonesian territory. Referring to the dispatch of his fighters, Ja'far Umar Thalib himself acknowledged that he had held a series of discussions with some members of the military elite, in spite of his denial of gaining support from them. In an interview in April 2000 he even justified the fact that someone was arranging a meeting between him and Widodo A.S., the then Commander-in-Chief of TNI.[10] Several newspapers covered the press release given by him on 2 May 2000, in which he boasted that he had discussed sending his fighters to the Moluccas with the Army Commander, Tyasno Soedarto, in the presence of the Commander of the Kodam Diponegoro, Bibit Waloyo, the Governor of Central Java, Mardiyanto, as well as the TNI Territorial Head of Staff, Agus Widjojo.[11]

The presence of military backing was further strengthened by TNI's decision not hold back the influx of Laskar Jihad fighters into the Moluccas. Max Tamaela, the Commander of the Kodam Pattimura, did nothing to impede Pelni (National Shipping Company) ships that brought Laskar Jihad fighters from dropping anchor at Ambon. Without the backing of at least some members of the military elite, it would not have been difficult for him to order his troops to blockade the port and send Laskar Jihad's fighters back to Java. The linkage between certain people in the military elite and Laskar Jihad was mentioned unequivocally by Aditjondro (2001). He revealed the involvement of, among others, Wiranto, Djaja Suparman, Suaidi Marasabessy and Sudi Silalahi, in collaboration with many serving and retired military officers in the Moluccas including Nano Sutarno, Rustam Kastor, Rusdi Hasanussy and M. Yusuf Ely.[12]

The conditioning of the Moluccas itself to welcome the Laskar Jihad fighters was crucial. Herein lies the significance of the support from various

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[9] Interview with a number of Laskar Jihad veterans, Yogyakarta, 20 December 2002.

[10] Panji Masyarakat, 'Target Kami Menjatuhkan Gus Dur', interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib, *Panji Masyarakat* 1: 4 (26 April 2000).

[11] Mohammad Shoelhi, *Laskar Jihad: Kambing Hitam Konflik Maluku* (Jakarta: Puzam, 2002), p. 27.

[12] Aditjondro (2001), pp. 115-7. But it should be noted here that Aditjondro did not provide sufficient proof for this speculation.

elements among the Moluccan Muslims. The process of rapprochement with them was facilitated by several Muslim politicians, including speakers in the *tabligh akbar sejuta ummat* such as Hamzah Haz, Ahmad Sumargono, Eggy Sujana, Husein Umar and Amien Rais. The most tangible support came from the first four, who praised Laskar Jihad's actions and defended it from criticism on various occasions. Ahmad Sumargono and Eggy Sujana were said to have repeatedly visited Laskar Jihad's headquarters and to have had close contacts with Ja'far Umar Thalib and Ayip Syafruddin.[13] In my interview with him, Ayip Syafruddin even claimed to have had a special channel to Ahmad Sumargono.[14] Significant support was also given to Laskar Jihad by Husein Umar, the secretary of DDII, the organization that set up the Committee for Overcoming Crises (Komite Penanggulangan Krisis, Kompak), the first humanitarian group to operate in the Moluccas, using support from two international philanthropic organizations, the London-based Muslim Aid and Saudi Arabia-based Haramayn Foundation.[15]

Various elements among the Moluccan Muslims played a crucial role in facilitating the arrival of Laskar Jihad's fighters. The main support was provided by people attached to the al-Fatah Mosque, which had long been the activity centre of various Islamic organizations in the Moluccas. A building near this mosque, Gedung Al-Atsari, serves as the headquarters of the provincial branch offices of DDII, Muhammadiyah and MUI. As a matter of fact, at least fourteen officials of DDII, MUI, Muhammadiyah, the Al-Fatah Mosque Foundation and other organizations signed a letter of recommendation in support of the arrival of Laskar Jihad's fighters. They included Rustam Kastor, Ali Fauzy, H.R.R. Hassanussi, Malik Selang, Hamdani Laturuasif, Ridwan Hasan, Paiang, A. Ely, Husein Toisuta, Abdul Wahab L, Husein Latael, Muhammad Djosan Bugis, Abd R. Hayoto and Hasan Pelu.[16]

Most of these leaders served as activists, if not chairmen, in the provincial branches of Islamic parties, such as PPP, PAN, PBB and PK.[17] In the June 1999 general elections, these parties failed to gain a significant number of seats in the provincial parliament of the Moluccas. The winner was the Christian-dominated PDI-P. Having been shocked by this result, the losers claimed that the Christian scenario of plotting to instigate the conflict contributed a great deal to their defeat. They uttered accusations alleging that the forced migration of Muslims seeking refuge in the outer islands of the Moluccas gave the Christians a political advantage. The Synod Chairman of the Moluccan

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[13] Interview with Abu Zaki Ery Ziyad, Yogyakarta, 27 October 2001.

[14] Interview with Ayip Syafruddin, Solo, 27 December 2002.

[15] Interview with Husein Umar, Jakarta, 17 June 2003. See also Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, *Laporan Kegiatan Kompak, Komite Penanggulangan Krisis 1998-1999* (Jakarta: DDII, 1999), p. 47.

[16] See 'Surat Dukungan', in *Bundel Maluku Hari Ini*, March-July 2000 (Yogyakarta and Ambon: Tim Medis Forum Komunikasi Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah, 2000).

[17] Interview with Isa Raharusun, Ambon, 22 April 2003.

Protestant Church, L.W.J. Hendriks, did not deny the advantage Christian politicians in PDI-P gained in the wake of the conflict, but strongly rejected the idea that this was intentionally plotted by the Christian side in its machinations to win the general elections.[18]

The most important figure among them was no doubt Rustam Kastor, a retired colonel who helped spread the rumours about RMS among Moluccan Muslims and actively published articles analysing the conflict as a conspiracy in *Ambon Ekspress*, a newspaper that seemed to align its contents with the Muslim side by portraying Muslims as the group that must defend themselves. This newspaper stood on the opposite side of the divide from *Siwalima* and *Suara Maluku,* two local dailies that painted a favourable picture of the Christian side. In his effort to spread the rumours to a national audience, he later published a book entitled *Fakta, Data dan Analisa, Konspirasi Politik RMS dan Kristen Menghancurkan Ummat Islam di Ambon-Maluku* (Facts, Data, and Analysis of an RMS-Christian Conspiracy to Destroy Muslims in Ambon, the Moluccas).[19]

In operational terms, Laskar Jihad gained support from two newly established local hard-line Muslim groups, the Front of the Defenders of Islam in the Moluccas (Front Pembela Islam Maluku, FPIM), not to be confused with the Muhammad Rizieq Syihab-led Front of the Defenders of Islam (Front Pembela Islam, FPI), and the Task-Force for Enjoining Good and Eliminating Evil (Satuan Tugas Amar Ma'ruf Nahy Munkar). These two groups provided access for Laskar Jihad to explore in detail the complexity of the battlefield and the map of the groups involved. It should be noted that both had nurtured close linkages with local jihad units and Muslim militia groups scattered all over Ambon.

The Front Pembela Islam Maluku was set up at the beginning of 2000 by M. Husain Toisuta, an influential local leader from Ahuru, and M. Husni Putuhena, a former teacher at the Pesantren Persis, Bangil, who is employed as a civil servant in the Department of Religious Affairs in Ambon.[20] Under their leadership, this organization emerged as one of the most vocal groups extolling the call to jihad. They distributed pamphlets and booklets to different elements among Moluccan Muslims to explain the chronology of the Moluccan conflict more clearly, reinforcing the image of the conflict as a systematic effort by Christians to kill or expel Muslims from the Moluccas. They sought to convince Moluccan Muslims that 'the only way to confront this challenge is to wage *jihād fī Sabīl Allah*'.[21]

[18] Interview with L.W.J. Hendriks, Ambon, 24 April 2003.

[19] Rustam Kastor, *Fakta, Data dan Analisa, Konspirasi Politik RMS dan Kristen Menghancurkan Umat Islam di Ambon dan Maluku* (Yogyakarta: Wihdah Press, 2001).

[20] Interview with M. Husni Putuhena, Ambon, 23 April 2003.

[21] M. Husni Putuhena, *Kerusuhan di Maluku: Konspirasi RMS dan Gereja Kristen untuk Rencana Gospel-Gold-Glory Menyongsong Abad Oikumene* (Ambon: FPIM, 2000).

The Satgas Amar Ma'ruf Nahyi Munkar emerged on the scene slightly later. This group was established and led by Mohammad Attamimy, a young figure of Hadrami-descent who had served as a lecturer at the State College of Islamic Studies (Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri, STAIN) of Ambon and has recently been appointed its director. The presence of this institution has long been a bone of contention for Christian Ambonese who denounced it as a hotbed for the dissemination of anti-Christian sentiments. The Satgas itself evolved from the Coordinating Committee of Security Fields (Badan Koordinasi Keamanan Lapangan), which belonged to the Coordinating Board of Moluccan Muslims (Badan Koordinasi Umat Islam Maluku) led by Abdullah Tuasikal.[22]

On the Jihad Battlefield

Muslims in the Moluccas enthusiastically welcomed Laskar Jihad fighters as if they were predestined heroes coming to sacrifice their lives in the defence of Islam in the islands. Along the roads from Port Slamet Ryadi to the al-Fatah Mosque, they stood side-by-side crying 'Allah Akbar, Allah Akbar, Laskar Jihad is coming'. Some embraced and kissed these young fighters. In front of the al-Fatah mosque, official welcoming ceremonies were organized at which the fighters were inaugurated as true jihad combatants. These inaugurated fighters subsequently marched to Kebun Cengkeh, the area around the State College for Islamic Studies of Ambon, where several houses had been provided for their accommodation. In this area, they set up a base that functioned as their headquarters and where they underwent military training including the handling of heavy weapons such as the MK III and artillery mortars under the instruction of a number of military personnel and policemen.[23] Lukman Baabduh served as Ja'far Umar Thalib's deputy responsible for coordinating the activities there. The division of labour among Laskar Jihad fighters was defined. Some remained there and others were sent to Wakal, Laha, Kota Jawa and Air Salobar.

Most of the Laskar Jihad fighters were unskilled combatants. They went to the Moluccas with limited experience and an untried fighting capacity. Except a small number of fighters (no more than one hundred) grouped into the Special Force (Pasukan Khusus), they were not intended to become combatants in the thick of the fight. As stated by Ja'far Umar Thalib himself, they were 'basically religious preachers, armed with religious knowledge to preach to the locals'. Of the more than hundred members I interviewed, only two fighters claimed to have engaged in real battles. Because of their capacities, most fighters were at best asked to watch for signs of imminent threats at jihad posts engraved with the familiar crossed sabres.

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[22] Interview with Muhammad Attamimy, Ambon, 23 April 2003.

[23] Interview with Mahmud Hasan, an eyewitness living near the area, Ambon, 25 April 2003.

Nevertheless, the arrival of these fighters undeniably fuelled the spirit of the Moluccan Muslims to raise metaphorical swords at all costs. This is because their arrival provided a new nuance to the local Muslim struggle, now more clearly imbued with the spirit of jihad. A local leader, Ali Fauzy, assessed the presence of Laskar Jihad as having been highly crucial to the mental attitude of Moluccan Muslims:

> 'The presence of Laskar Jihad seems to have awakened our consciousness to the dignity of jihad so that thousands of people, young and old, men and women, enthusiastically took part in a resistance to belligerent infidels. They were ashamed to keep silent while their Muslim brothers who had come from far away put their lives at risk by traveling to Ambon'.[24]

The Commander-in-Chief of Laskar Jihad, Ja'far Umar Thalib played his role perfectly as the main actor. He mesmerized Moluccan Muslims who listened meticulously his speeches and sermons delivered on various occasions. Partly because of these speeches, he became much admired. People in every corner of Ambon spoke about him and praised his heroism. Recordings of his triumphant words were reproduced and continuously replayed on radio cassettes. The national media enthusiastically covered his activities, with headlines such as 'Commander of the Laskar Jihad, Ja'far Umar Thalib, leads jihad in Ambon'. He was thus reinforced and acknowledged nationally as a hero. On such occasions, he usually imparted fresh life to the jihad spirit of his fighters as well as that of local Muslims, reiterating the rhetoric of jihad. In one of his sermons entitled 'Uniting Muslim Lines' (*Menyatukan Barisan Kaum Muslim*), delivered at the gathering in front of al-Fatah Mosque just a few days after the Laskar Jihad's first arrivals, Ja'far Umar Thalib said:

> 'We are now being attacked by Christian enemies who desire to remove us from the face of the earth. Therefore, we have to answer this challenge with *jihād fī sabīl Allāh*. Don't think of any other alternatives. We do not want to be colonized. If we wage a war against them, we will retain our dignity. That is the only choice. This is not taking place only in the Moluccas, but also in Poso, Luwu, and Gorontalo. They will continue to wage a crusade against us. Muslims in Java and other islands are preparing themselves to wage a war against belligerent unbelievers, and their collaborators alike. I am sure that the unbelievers will be defeated by Muslim holy fighters resisting them under the slogan *Allāh Akbar*. They rise to wage a *jihād fī*

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[24] Interview with Ali Fauzy, Ambon, 22 April 2003.

> *sabīl Allāh*, under one command, the command of God, to defeat rebellious warmongering unbelievers'.[25]

In his record of the events of Muslim attacks against Christians, Rustam Kastor praised this sermon as having contributed a great deal to the spirit of revenge among Moluccan Muslims, inspiring them to take up arms against Christians:

> 'They appeared in the streets to applaud their heroes locked in combat on the battlefields. They bestowed blessing on and chanted "Allah Akbar" to the victims brought back to the rear. Everybody seemed enthusiastic about engaging in this war. This "crazy" mass were apparently inspired to action by the sermon of Ja'far Umar Thalib, the Commander-in-Chief of the Laskar Jihad, in a mosque in Ambon, stating that to every martyr in the battles to defend either God's religion or country, Almighty Allah would give him a pass to enter the Gates of Heaven and seven other passes for his closest family members'.[26]

In retrospect there is no denying that after the coming of the Laskar Jihad fighters to Ambon, the aggressiveness of the Muslim side intensified significantly. In mid-May 2000, Muslim forces attacked and took over Ahuru. In the same month they attacked Galala and the police Mobil Brigade (Brigade Mobil, Brimob) headquarters in Tantui. Simultaneously, they seized Efrata Church and Otto Kwick Hospital located in the same area. One particularly efficacious result of the attack on the Brimob headquarters was that Muslims obtained various kinds of weaponry, including Colt 28 Pistols, Jungle Carbines, SKS Rifles, MK IIIs, LMGs and even Mortar-5s. This new weaponry bolstered the Muslims' pre-emptive strike capability. Previously they had collected standard weapons like AKs, MK IIIs, M-16s and ready assembled bombs containing TNT (Trinitrotoluene) through individual channels.[27] Subsequently, they attacked and seized the Christian University of the Moluccas at Talake and the State University of Pattimura at Poka. The increase in Muslim attacks on Christian targets also occurred in the North Moluccas. Under the leadership of Abu Bakar Wahid al-Banjari, Muslim militias in the islands sought and won retaliation for the total loss of the Muslim side in December 1999 when Christian militias killed more than 500 Muslims in Galela and Tobelo. Because of the upsurge in the aggressiveness of the Muslim side during these months, almost forty Christian villages were ruined, a loss hardly to be compared with that of the Muslim side, which lost only one village, Iha, on Saparua.[28]

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[25] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Menyatukan Barisan Kaum Muslim', *Tasjilat Ihya al-Sunnah*, cassette recording of the speech delivered on the *tabligh akbar* in Ambon in May 2000 (Yogyakarta: DPP FKAWJ, 2000).

[26] Rustam Kastor, *Badai Pembalasan Laskar Mujahidin Ambon dan Maluku* (Yogyakarta: Wihdah Press, 2000), pp. 17-8.

[27] Ibid, pp. 34- 67.

[28] Interview with Ali Fauzy, Ambon, 22 April 2003.

The Moluccan Muslims believed that the hour had sounded to take revenge against Christians, who had previously appeared to have the upper hand. They were ready to defeat the core forces of the Christians mobilized by two local Ambonese *preman* groups led by Agus Wattimena and Berty Loupatty, respectively, working in collaboration with the Jakarta *premans*. These two *preman* groups did indeed appear to be strong opponents able to coordinate small groups of 100 to 200 in number in Ambon as well as other groups in the rest of the islands. They used traditional weapons supplemented by home-made guns and a few automatic weapons. Since April 1998 Wattimena had moulded his members into the Christ Militia Force (Laskar Kristus, LK), while Loupatty organized his members into the Coker (Cowok-cowok Kristen/Cowok-Cowok Keren, meaning 'Christian boys' or 'handsome boys').[29] Both groups often extolled slogans such as 'Saya Cinta Yesus' (I love Jesus), 'Yesus Raya' (Jesus is Victorious), 'Darah Yesus' (Blood of Jesus) and 'Martir Kristus' (Martyr of Christ), and sang the Christian hymn 'Maju Laskar Kristen' (Onward Christian Soldiers).[30]

The newcomers influenced not only their co-religionists. The arrival of the Laskar Jihad fighters stimulated other elements among Christian Moluccans to organize themselves. Alex Manuputti, for instance, established the Front Kedaulatan Maluku (Moluccan Sovereignty Front, FKM) on 15 July 2000 in Kudamati, Ambon, but this organization was not made public until 18 December of that year.[31] Having been established as an organization aiming to restore the sovereignty of the Moluccan people under the Republic of South Moluccas in 1950, the presence of this organization certainly legitimized some Laskar Jihad claims about the linkage between Christian Moluccans and RMS.

It should be noted that the key success of Muslim attacks against Christian targets during these months remained in the hands of local Muslim forces that had got their act together and succeeded in organizing and arming themselves. The Special Force of Laskar Jihad certainly involved themselves in the battles. They were especially charged with operating Mortar-5s after they had received training from military personnel. Under this expert instruction, they even succeeded in modifying Mortar-5s by attaching previously assembled bombs. Their involvement in battles was easily recognizable since they never failed to display their distinctive identity. They wore *jalabiyya* and turban or T-shirts decorated with their organization's logo and the boldfaced words 'Laskar Jihad Ahlu Sunnah wal-Jama'ah'. Ja'far Umar Thalib acknowledged the

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[29] Badrus Sholeh, *Ethno-Religious Conflict and Reconciliation: Dynamics of Muslim and Christian Relationships in Ambon,* MA thesis (Melborne: Australian National University, 2003), p. 35 ; see also Wens Manggut, "Dari Coker Sampai Laskar Kristus", *Tempo* (19 May 2002), p. 32.

[30] Sukidi Mulyadi, "Violence under the Banner of Religion: The Case of Laskar Jihad and Laskar Kristus", *Studia Islamika-Indonesian Journal for Islamic Studies* 10: 2 (2003), pp. 77-101.

[31] See Kirsten E. Schulze, "Laskar Jihad and the Conflict in Ambon", *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 9: 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 57-69.

involvement of Laskar Jihad in a series of Muslim attacks on Christian villages. As the commander-in-chief, he himself claimed to have led several of the attacks. His chief concern was maintaining the spirit and buoyant mentality of his fighters.[32] In the course of their engagements, some forty fighters perished.

Because of its conspicuous involvement, Laskar Jihad became identical to the number of other outside Muslim paramilitary forces taking part in the battles against Christians in the Moluccas. One was the Special Force (*Laskar Khos*) of Laskar Mujahidin. In their operations, fighters preferred to wear black clothes to accentuate their identity as a secret force. Although their actual number did not exceed 300, including a dozen foreigners from France, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Algeria, its operations appear to have been more effective, which is not unthinkable given the sophisticated weapons they had received from abroad. They played an important role in teaching local Muslim militias the technology of assembling bombs.[33] Inevitably, given their doctrinal differences, the Pasukan Khusus of Laskar Jihad and the Laskar Khos of Laskar Mujahidin, both of which were arbitrarily thrown together by the media or among Christians as “the Laskar Jihad”, often displayed mutual hostility.

Laskar Mujahidin emerged as the favourite outside jihad group among local Muslim militias. There was no doubt of this, because its strategy was approved and, in contrast to Laskar Jihad, it did not criticize the religious beliefs and practices of local Muslims. For local Muslim militias, Laskar Jihad fighters were skillful only in reading the Qur’an and preaching to people to follow their doctrines. They conspicuously lacked the required tactical and strategic skills. A member of a local Muslim militia group declared that he had several times warned Laskar Jihad fighters of their tactical carelessness when participating in attacks against Christians. He said that the stupidity displayed by Laskar Jihad fighters frequently nullified the tactics and strategies deployed by other Muslims. Before engaging in combat, local Muslim militias usually surveyed their target, drew on a plan of attack and prepared their weaponry. They moved as small, skilled combat units. Such calculations were usually cast to the winds by Laskar Jihad fighters, who preferred to carry out sporadic attacks openly. He asserted that its inability to design proper strategy and tactics made Laskar Jihad more a target than a threat to the enemies of Muslims.[34] Viewed from this perspective, Laskar Jihad’s achievement in the Moluccas was, in many ways, strikingly limited.

Leaving aside aspersions on their martial qualities, what appears to have been more interesting about Laskar Jihad fighters was perhaps their pioneering efforts to conduct socio-religious activities. These efforts were deemed to be part of jihad. Shortly after their arrival in the Moluccas, they provided social services, such as garbage disposal, that had stopped functioning at the outbreak

[32] Interview with Ja’far Umar Thalib, Yogyakarta, 22 December 2002.
[33] Interview with Faturrahman A.G., Ambon, 26 April 2003.
[34] Interview with Abdul Aziz S., Ambon, 27 April 2003.

of the conflict. They also set up a dozen primary schools in abandoned school buildings. True to their stated purpose, they set up numerous Qur'anic learning centres called 'Al-Manshurah' and rehabilitated mosques that eventually fell into their possession. In a praiseworthy endeavour, they succeeded in building a medical clinic bearing the name of Laskar Jihad Medical Team, AhMed, in Kebun Cengkeh, that provided health services free of charge. Initially, this clinic was built to give first aid for the victims of the conflict.

Rajm

To reinforce their presence in the Moluccas and shore up their image as the heroes of the heroes, Laskar Jihad fighters actively campaigned for the implementation of *sharī'a*. In various cities, they conducted sweeps on lairs of 'vice', such as gambling dens, liquor and drug stores and brothels. In Pekanbaru in June 2000, for instance, they destroyed homes of residents and kidnapped four men accused of being brokers of vice. On another occasion they even burnt down one hundred properties they suspected of harbouring prostitution. In Solo, they destroyed a number of cafes in collaboration with other militant groups.[35] Indubitably, the main zone of their operations was Ambon. In this town they arrested a number of prominent figures in the vice trade and imposed harsh sentences. They are even said to have executed three drug dealers. In these actions they acted as the police enjoining good and eliminating evil (*'amar ma'rūf nahy munkar*). Prepared to cleanse the town of vice, they were extremely proud of recounting their experiences to cow frightened Moluccans who had become the targets of their operations. Ja'far Umar Thalib claimed these efforts were a step towards bringing the Moluccan Muslims back to the right path in accordance with the example set by the *Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ*.[36]

As the demands for the implementation of *sharī'a* were more fluently articulated across the country, Laskar Jihad fighters attempted to prove that they were indeed ready to espouse *sharī'a*. At the end of March 2001, they enforced a *rajm* sentence, death by stoning, on one of their fighters who had raped a local girl. Again Ja'far Umar Thalib emerged as the main actor, the protagonist leading the execution. Having received the indictment from a woman who reported what had happened to her daughter, he ordered the provost team of Laskar Jihad to interrogate the suspect. Before him, the suspect confessed his guilt and declared that he was ready to receive any sentence.

Subsequently, Ja'far Umar Thalib called a meeting with a dozen members of the advisory body of FKAWJ who were present in Ambon, to discuss technical aspects of the execution of the sentence. Some took the initiative of requesting a *fatwā* from Rabī' ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī of Saudi Arabia via telephone, who was said to have given an affirmative reply. In order to

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[35] 'Sepekan Mencekam di Kota Bengawan', *Adil* (10 December 2000).

[36] Interview with Ja'far Umar Thalib, Yogyakarta, 22 December 2002.

legitimate the procedure, the advisory board asked the suspect to write a confession and make a declaration that he had sincerely accepted the *rajm*, while giving him the chance to reconsider his confession. But the suspect was said to have been resolute about accepting his punishment.[37]

During the process of the execution, hundreds of Laskar Jihad fighters, joined by a dozen local Muslim leaders, assembled in a field in Ahuru. Guarded by the Provost Team of Laskar Jihad, the suspect walked slowly towards a prepared hole. Having been placed in the hole, the suspect's body was covered with soil up to his neck. Standing five metres from the hole, Ja'far Umar Thalib observed the whole process, displaying himself as an authority like a *qāḍī* in medieval Islam. Before the sentence was handed down, he gave a sermon explaining the magnitude of the *rajm* sentence. 'What we do will be regarded by Allah as a sign of sincerity in upholding the religion of Allah, because of which Allah will bestow victory upon us in our jihad', said Ja'far Umar Thalib.[38]

Having delivered the sermon, Ja'far Umar Thalib approached the suspect and asked again whether he sincerely accepted the sentence. The suspect was said to have nodded his head while saying, 'With the will of God, I am sincere'. Mohammad Attamimy, a leader of Moluccan Muslims, suggested the suspect withdraw his confession, but this suggestion was apparently rejected.[39] A heroic scene occurred when the suspect conveyed his last will. He apparently wanted to kiss the hand of Ja'far Umar Thalib. While giving his hand, Ja'far Umar Thalib ordered his fighters to start stoning. This stoning lasted for around a quarter hour. According to an eye-witness, after checking the pulse of the suspect, a medical worker of Laskar Jihad clinic raised his hand to indicate that the suspect was already dead.[40]

The police arrested Ja'far Umar Thalib at Juanda Airport in Surabaya, on his journey back to Yogyakarta. He was accused of the torturing to death of one of his followers and of incitement to criminal violence. In reaction to this arrest, a number of conservative Muslim organizations including DDII, KISDI, BKPMI and Perguruan Islam al-Syafi'iyyah (Al-Syafi'iyyah Islamic Institution of Learning) organized a gathering in front of DDII headquarters in Jakarta, attended by the leaders of these organizations: Hartono Mardjono, Hussein Umar, Kholil Ridwan and Daud Rasyid. They stated their determination to defend Ja'far Umar Thalib.[41]

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[37] Interview with Muhammad Umar As-Sewed, Yogyakarta, 19 December 2002.

[38] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Laskar Jihad Tegakkan Hukum Allah: Rajam Anggotanya yang Melakukan Zina', *www.laskarjihad.or.id* (March 2001).

[39] Interview with Mohammad Attamimy, Ambon, 23 April 2003.

[40] This event became the subject of national media reports. See Sukirno, 'Ikhlas Dihukum Rajam', *Republika* (10 May 2001); and Taufik Abriansyah and Endang Sukendar, 'Perintah Rajam Panglima Ja'far', *Gatra* (12 May 2001).

[41] 'Beberapa Pengacara Siap Bela Panglima Laskar Jihad', *www.berpolitik.com* (5 May 2001).

The leaders of Majelis Mujahidin displayed a similar reaction. Irfan S. Awwas, the executive leader of the council, stated that the arrest of Ja'far Umar Thalib had been defined more by political interests to limit militant Muslim groups rather than by any legal consideration. Muhammad Rizieq Syihab and Muhammad Husein al-Habsyi, the leaders of the Front Pembela Islam and the Jama'ah Ikhwanul Muslimin Indonesia, respectively, also demanded his release. The same demand was even made by some Muslim organizations of the establishment, including the Muhammadiyah, Al-Irsyad and Persis. A number of Islamic political parties, such as PPP, PBB, PK and PAN, immediately voiced their support for Ja'far Umar Thalib and mobilized their supporters to pressure the police. In Ambon, local Muslim leaders such as Ali Fauzy, Abdul Wahab Polpoke, Mohammad Attamimy and Muhammad Husni Putuhena organized a demonstration in front of Al-Fatah Mosque, demanding the police act justly.[42]

Partly because of the demands of the aforementioned Muslim organizations, the police released Ja'far Umar Thalib and changed his legal status to that of house detainee. Following the pre-judicial trial, which determined that his arrest was illegal, the police eventually absolved Ja'far Umar Thalib of all indictments.

What is of interest here is that by imposing the *rajm* sentence, Ja'far Umar Thalib elevated his position on the ladder of Indonesian Islam. He became known not only as a jihad leader, but also as one of the vanguard who supported comprehensive implementation of *sharī'a*. It were as though he had challenged those who had previously spoken out about the need to return to the Jakarta Charter to prove their commitment to Islam. DDII in collaboration with nine Islamic media, including *Saksi, Sabili, Ummi, Tarbawi, Radio As-Syafi'iyah, Annida, Eramuslim.Com, Media Dakwah* and *Suara Hidayatullah*, then bestowed on him an award called the *Sharī'a* Award and gave the family of the victim the so-called 'friendship donation'.[43]

Winning the Battle with the Media

The greatest achievement of Laskar Jihad was perhaps its success in conducting propaganda and directing public opinion through the media. As I have noted in chapter IV, before dispatching its volunteers, it had published *Maluku Hari Ini* (Moluccas Today), a pamphlet printed out on a single double-sided sheet of paper presenting information about day-to-day developments in the Moluccan conflict, notably, the fighting between Muslims and Christians and the activities of Laskar Jihad. Utilizing the Internet, the pamphlet could instantly reach

[42] Dwitri Waluyo et al., 'Jalan Sulit Menjepit Syariat Laskar Jihad', *Gatra*, 19 May 2001, p. 25.

[43] See Adian Husaini, *Rajam dalam Arus Budaya Syahwat: Penerapan Hukum Rajam di Indonesia dalam Tinjauan Syariat Islam, Hukum Positif & Politik Global* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2001). See also 'Abdullah, Sosok Mujahid Mukhlisin', *Media Dakwah* (June 2001), pp. 54-5.

readers scattered throughout the country where Laskar Jihad branch offices had been established. Each branch office only needed to download the messages, which were already laid out in a desk-top publishing format. Copies were distributed free of charge in public places and mosques, particularly for the consumption of those coming for Friday congregation.
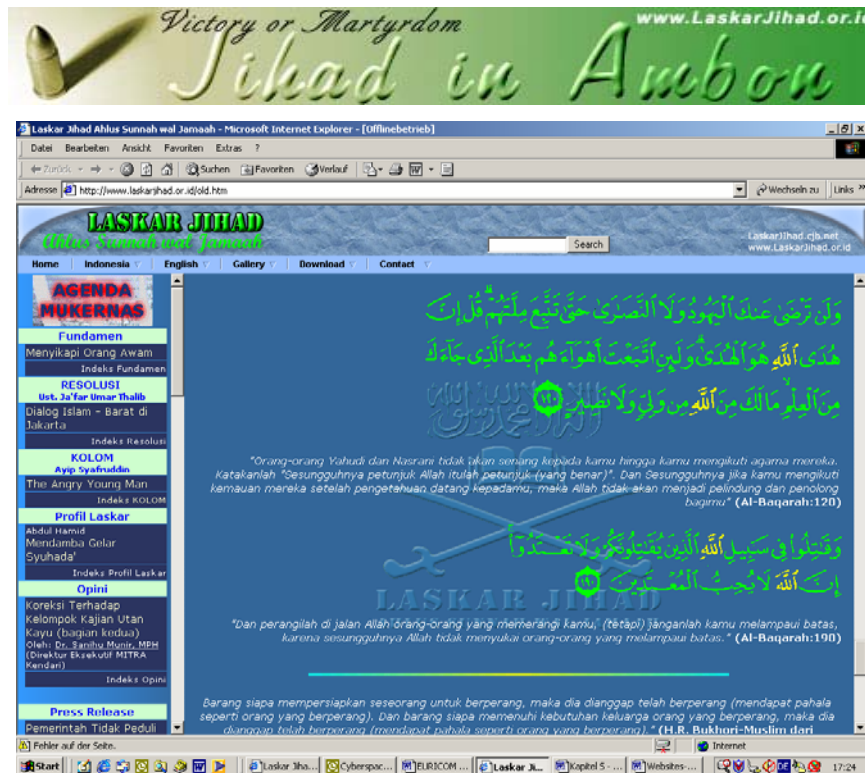
Figure XV: Laskar Jihad Online extolling the slogan, '*Berjihad di Dunia Maya*' (Jihad in Cyberspace).

Simultaneous with the dispatch of its fighters to the Moluccas, Laskar Jihad took a leap into cyberspace. It set up *Laskar Jihad Online* at *www.laskarjihad.or.id*, which provided information pertaining to its activities, stories around the developments in the Moluccan conflict and sermons about the religious significance of jihad. It also featured stories and links to the websites of various jihad groups around the world, including those in Chechnya, Kashmir and Afghanistan. Laskar Jihad claimed that its website was created in an effort to counterbalance the domination of cyberspace by the Christian media. The website became an interactive channel linking Laskar Jihad with people all over

the world. *Laskar Jihad Online* was bilingual. The English edition was said to have been edited by an Australian sympathetic to Laskar Jihad.[44]
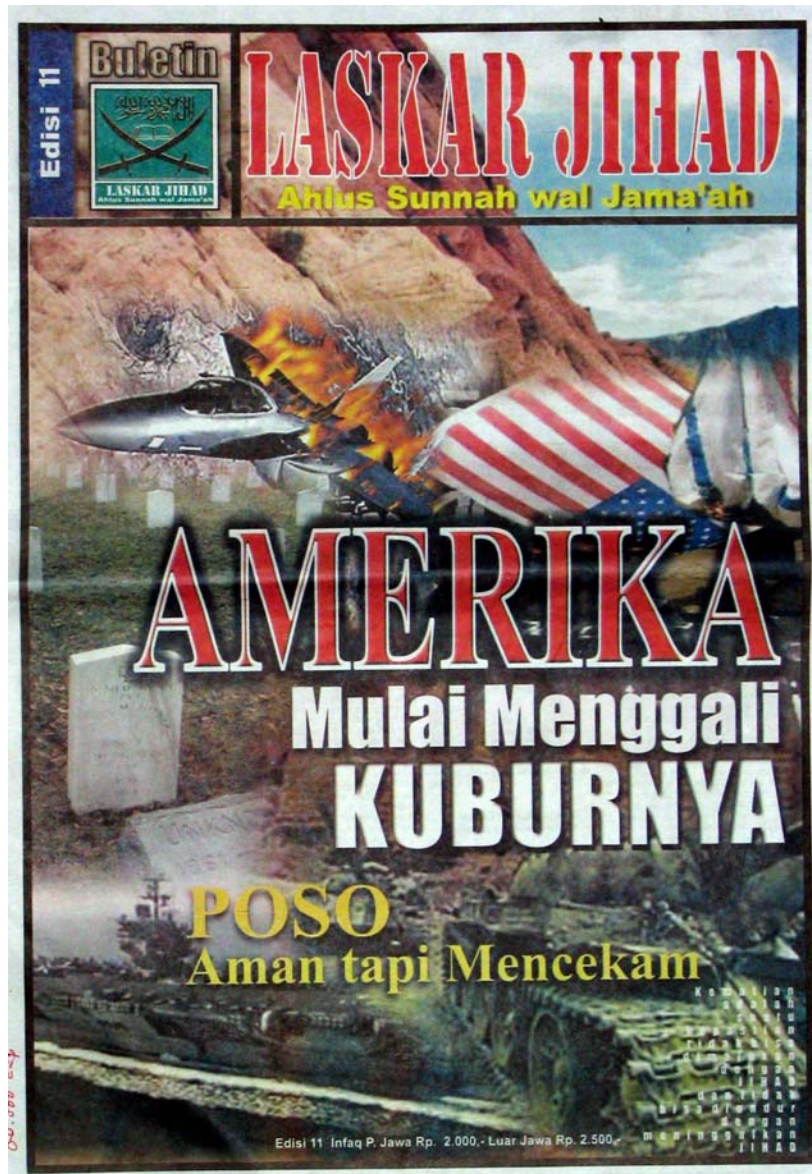
Figure XVI: The Buletin Laskar Jihad Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah, the mouthpiece of Laskar Jihad.

[44] Interview with Adib Susanto, Jakarta, 27 October 2002.

Laskar Jihad Online extolled a slogan, '*Berjihad di Dunia Maya*' (Jihad in Cyberspace), complete with a banner that read 'Victory or Martyrdom: Jihad in Ambon'. The slogan highlighted two Qur'anic verses on the website to support the image of the Moluccan conflict as a religious war. Often quoted by militant Muslims to legitimize their hostility towards Christians, these verses read: 'Jews and Christians will never allow Muslims to exist until the Muslims follow their religions' (QS 2: 120); and 'Muslims are obliged to fight against those who fight against them' (QS 2: 190). The quotations provided the hostile discourse spread on this website with its legitimacy and justification, and this, in turn, bolstered the identity of the people behind it. By the skilful management of this website, Laskar Jihad sought to create a resilient image of its heroic actions to save the Moluccan Muslims in danger of being slaughtered by Christian enemies. The stories about atrocities committed by Christians were portrayed in different ways and backed up by a gallery of photographs adroitly framed within the narrative of defending the integrity of the Indonesian nation-state from the attacks of rebels. Such presentation bolstered the value of Laskar Jihad's struggle in the Moluccas.

Aware of the limited access of the majority of Laskar Jihad's members and Indonesian Muslims in general to the Internet, Laskar Jihad subsequently published the *Buletin Laskar Jihad Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah,* again using the logo of 'two crossed sabres with the Qur'an and the Muslim profession of faith in Arabic letters in between'. This sixteen-page large lay-out weekly bulletin featured colour photos and advertisements. Compared to the images in the *Maluku Hari Ini* or *Laskar Jihad Online*, the colourful photos of Muslim victims and destroyed mosques in this bulletin appeared more real, complemented by stories of the ferocity of Christian attacks on Muslims. The bulletin was offered 'free of charge' by Laskar Jihad members standing at intersections, traffic lights, mosques and at other public venues.

Besides the aforementioned media propaganda distributed on a national scale, Laskar Jihad set up a radio station in Kebun Cengkeh, Ambon, as a part of its efforts to disseminate its jihad messages. Named *Suara Perjuangan Muslim Maluku* (the Voice of the Struggle of Moluccan Muslims) and broadcast on 05.5 FM, it was highly effective in building lines of communication between Laskar Jihad fighters and Ambonese Muslims. Its broadcasts unfailingly sought to fuel the militancy and the fighting spirit among Muslims in Ambon. Every day recordings of religious sermons by a number of Salafi preachers, religious lessons and recitations of the Qur'an were broadcast. In one of its favourite programmes, it broadcast the following contemplative passage:

> '…When our national flag is trampled, our hearts are wounded. We have nothing, except the belief in the greatness of this country. We are convinced that this country will be victorious should we but return to the way of Allah. Let us remove parasites. Let us march in step to sweep out rebellious

> groups…We are not afraid of death. Indeed we are pursuing martyrdom. The most important thing for us is peace in Heaven. We believe that when we die on the battlefield the wind of Heaven will welcome us. We are looking forward to achieving that moment.…'[45]

A dozen Moluccan Muslims I interviewed praised this radio station, claiming that it was the only effective means of communication, particularly when clashes blocked their access to other villages and the city of Ambon. They were convinced that messages broadcast by this radio played a crucial role in maintaining their spirit to survive and win battles. Here Laskar Jihad proved its capability to use the media to shore up its image as the defender of the Moluccan Muslims and thereby reach its ends. Robert W. Hefner (2002) argues that the skilful use of media technologies allowed Laskar Jihad to outflank Indonesia's mainstream organizations and tout a militantly anti-Christian and anti-pluralist interpretation of Islam.[46]

Changing Plot

Shifts in the political landscape determine the sustainability of a drama staged in a transitional situation. Four or five months after the arrival of Laskar Jihad in the Moluccas, the room to manoeuvre available to this group began to narrow. This was particularly felt after pressures exerted by various elements in Indonesian society and the international community succeeded in forcing the Indonesian government to take necessary political measures. Having declared the Moluccas as a civilian emergency zone and appointed the governor of the province, M. Saleh Latuconsina, the civilian emergency authority, in August 2000, Abdurrahman Wahid ordered TNI to send in Yon Gab (TNI combined battalion), which consisted of the elite troops of the army, navy and air force, namely, the Kopassus (Special Force Command), Korps Marinir (Marine Corps) and Korps Pasukan Khas (Special Force Corps), respectively. Under the command of the then Kodam Pattimura commander, Max Tamaela, the battalion's mission was to sweep away all armed militia groups involved in the Moluccan conflict.

Yon Gab immediately launched its operation, arresting hundreds of armed militia group members and military and police personnel who had sided with either Muslim or Christian parties. Indeed, the involvement of military personnel and the police in assisting the combating parties became one of the most remarkable phenomena during this conflict.[47] In one operation in Air

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[45] Radio Suara Perjuangan Muslim Maluku, 'Syair-Syair Perjuangan', *Tasjilat al-Mulk*, Cassette Record, (Ambon: FKAWJ, 2000).

[46] Hefner (2003).

[47] See Bina Bektiati et al., 'Jurus Baru Membabat Para Desertir' and 'Alumni Galala dan Pasukan Siluman', *Tempo* (16 June 2002), pp. 24-6.

Salobar, Yon Gab detained a dozen Laskar Jihad fighters accused of collecting guns and other standard military weapons such as mortar launchers, anti-bullet waistcoats, lifejackets, raincoats and thirty-seven assembled bombs. The arrests implanted a deep hatred of Yon Gab among Laskar Jihad fighters. After I Made Yasa replaced Max Tamaela as the commander of the Kodam Pattimura, Yon Gab intensified its operations. In January 2001, a dozen local Muslims and Laskar Jihad fighters were shot by Yon Gab personnel in Batu Merah. As a consequence, tensions between Laskar Jihad and Yon Gab escalated.

The peak of tension occurred when Yon Gab attacked the Medical Clinic of Laskar Jihad in Kebun Cengkeh, the main area of concentration of its fighters, killing twenty-four Laskar Jihad fighters and injuring thirty-four others. This so-called Kebun Cengkeh tragedy took place on 24 June 2001. I Made Yasa pointed out that that action had to be taken because at that time Yon Gab had been attacked by armed militias hiding behind the clinic. He claimed that his troops were forced to counterattack to put the weaponry used by the attackers out of commission. Laskar Jihad stoutly refuted all explanations given by I Made Yasa and demanded the government investigate.[48] It even issued a *fatwā* demanding his death.[49]

Sympathy poured in from a number of Muslim organizations and nearly made Laskar Jihad the rallying point for Indonesian Muslims. Conservative Muslim leaders inside and outside the Moluccas, including Ali Fauzy, Abdul Wahab Polpoke, Rustam Kastor, Husein Syihab al-Habsyi and Fuad ‘Abd Allah Muhammad al-Habsyi, among others, condemned Yon Gab and demanded the government conduct a comprehensive investigation. The Council of Indonesian *‘Ulamā’* set up an investigation team led by Husein Umar of DDII with members drawn from various Muslim organizations, including the Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama. Because of the pressure from those parties, the National Commission of Human Rights sent an independent investigation team. At the end of June 2001, I Made Yasa was removed from his position. Laskar Jihad subsequently demanded he accept responsibility for his actions, asking the Tim Pengacara Muslim (Muslim Attorney Team, TPM) led by Mahendradatta to charge him with murder.[50]

The Kebun Cengkeh case can be considered as the turning point of Laskar Jihad’s presence in the Moluccas. After that, the group no longer had the space to present its jihad drama effectively. Djoko Santoso, who came to replace I Made Yasa, acted more circumspectly in coping with the conflict but remained intolerant of any armed militia group. As a result, in line with the decrease in the

[48] Laskar Jihad published a book explaining its own version of the chronology of this incident. See Ayip Syafruddin and Eko Prasetyo, *Tragedi Kebun Cengkeh: Fakta Pembantaian Paramedis, Pasien dan Warga Sipil Ambon* (Jakarta: Jihad Press, 2002).

[49] Aries Kelana et al., ‘Fatwa Mati Kebun Cengkeh’, *Gatra* (7 July 2001), pp. 39-40. See also ‘Fatwa Mati Untuk Pangdam Pattimura’, *www.laskarjihad.or.id* (June 2001).

[50] Ibid.

bloody clashes between Muslims and Christians, sweepings of Laskar Jihad by Yon Gab were frequently heard.

Changes in the political landscape had an impact on the relationship between the military and Laskar Jihad.[51] After January 2001, Wahid's position began to teeter. Various political powers demanded his resignation because of allegations of corruption in the Badan Urusan Logistik (Board of Logistics Affairs, Bulog). Determined to remain, Wahid issued a Presidential Decree dissolving the MPR, but in an extraordinary MPR session in July 2001, his power was abrogated and Megawati, who was known to have cordial ties with the senior military command, was appointed to replace him, while Hamzah Haz, was chosen as vice-president.

Laskar Jihad fighters reacted promptly to the appointment of Megawati by organizing a gathering in Yogyakarta. Once again, they proclaimed a determination to continue their jihad in the Moluccas and to send militia troops to other trouble regions.[52] But Laskar Jihad faced a dilemma since Hamzah Haz, one of its main allies, was in power with Megawati. A few days after the Yogyakarta gathering, a Laskar Jihad delegation went to the office of Hamzah Haz and claimed that the appointment of Megawati, a woman, as president was a sin committed by all Indonesian Muslims. They reiterated the necessity to implement *sharīʻa*, as if they were demanding the fulfilment of a promise Hamzah Haz had made as leader of the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan. Hamzah Haz replied by asking them to embrace Islam as *raḥmatan li'l-ʻālamīn*, a blessing for the whole universe, and not to continually appeal to militancy and violence.[53]

This changing plot helps shed some light on the failure of Laskar Jihad to open a new front by sending its fighters to Poso, Central Sulawesi, in August 2001. Like the Moluccas, this region had witnessed native Christians killing immigrant Muslims that ensued after a street fight between youths of different ethnic groups at the end of 1998. Hundreds of schools, governmental buildings and mosques and churches were burnt down, tens of thousands of residents were forced into refugee camps, thousands were injured and thousands died. While noting the local nature of the conflict, Lorraine V. Aragon (2001) emphasizes the presence of a translocal and international dimension contributed by religious sentiments that developed during the conflict.[54] Laskar Jihad sought to frame its call for jihad in Poso, as it had in the Moluccas, under the banner of the

[51] See Michael Davis, 'Laskar Jihad and the Political Position of Conservative Islam in Indonesia', *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 24: 1 (April 2002), pp. 26-7.

[52] 'Ribuan Laskar Jihad Siap ke Poso', *www.laskarjiad.or.id*, 7 August 2001.

[53] See 'Laskar Jihad Berharap Pemerintah Serius Tangani Kasus Kerusuhan', *Kompas*, 8 August 2001. See also 'Panglima Laskar Jihad Bertemu Wakil Presiden', *www.laskarjihad.or.id*, 9 August 2001.

[54] For a further account on this conflict, see Lorraine V Aragon, 'Communal Violence in Poso, Central Sulawesi: Where People Eat Fish and Fish Eat People', *Indonesia* 72 (October 2001).

conspiracy theory accusing Zionist and (Christian) Crusader international forces as the parties responsible for the conflict.[55] Yet despite its success in sending some 700 fighters scattered in a dozen camps built in cooperation with local Muslims, it failed to carry out significant action and was forced to retreat in a relatively short time.[56]

Subsequently, Laskar Jihad sought to send its fighters to Aceh, a province that has long had to contend with the separatist movement Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (Aceh Freedom Movement, GAM). Ja'far Umar Thalib visited this province in February 2002 and met a number of Acehnese leaders. To show his commitment to the integrity of the Indonesian nation-state, he stated his visit was to help Muslims end the enduring conflict. At the same time, he revealed his disappointment with GAM, which had initially aimed at establishing an Islamic state, claiming it had resorted to a simple ethnic struggle subject to the interests of the West, particularly the United States.[57] Acehnese leaders without exception denounced Ja'far Umar Thalib as a proxy for hard-line elements in TNI, and his effort to send fighters to Aceh failed.[58]

The same thing happened when Ja'far Umar Thalib visited Papua in his efforts to develop branch offices established by his lieutenants in Sorong, Jayapura and Manokwari, and to wage jihad against the separatist movement Gerakan Papua Merdeka (Papua Freedom Movement, GPM). The Presidium of Papua Council and leaders of Muslim organizations, such as the chairman of the Papuan branch office of the Council of Indonesian *'Ulamā'* strongly protested his visit. The secretary-general of the Presidium Papua Council, Thoha al-Hamid, stated that there was no reason for Laskar Jihad to come to Papua. He was convinced that the presence of Laskar Jihad would simply fuel conflict among Papuans themselves, since it would divide Papuans along the lines of religion, ethnicity and race.[59]

Post-11 September

In the aftermath of the 11 September tragedy, Laskar Jihad had to confront not only the Indonesian government but also the United States administration. The US saw Southeast Asia, notably Indonesia, as one of the most important targets in the global campaign against terrorism, owing to the emergence of radical Islamist groups suspected to have linkage with al Qaeda terrorist cells. This suspicion was reinforced by the wave of anti-Americanism in reaction to George W. Bush's determination to retaliate by bombing Afghanistan when its leaders would not give up Osama bin Lāden, whom Washington suspected of being

[55] Ayip Syafruddin, 'Mengapa Laskar Jihad ke Poso?' *Buletin Laskar Jihad*, 9 (2001).
[56] Interview with Ayip Syafruddin, 22 December 2003.
[57] Ja'far Umar Thalib, 'Selangkah Lagi AS Kuasai Aceh', *Buletin Laskar Jihad*, 17 (2002).
[58] See 'Anti Jihad di Serambi Mekah', *Forum Keadilan* 46 (3 March 2002), p. 61.
[59] See 'Militant Indonesians in Papua', *CNN*, 19 April 2002.

responsibe for the 11 September attacks. Islamic groups condemned the attack on Afghanistan and demanded the government sever its diplomatic ties with the United States. In some cities demonstrations were followed by burning the American flag and the billboards of McDonald's and KFC franchise restaurants.

Allegations linking Laskar Jihad—as well as two other paramilitary organizations, Laskar Pembela Islam and Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia—to al Qaeda became more widely spread. The then United States Ambassador to Indonesia, Robert S. Gelbard, alleged Laskar Jihad was connected to al Qaeda, pointing to the encounter between Ja'far Umar Thalib and Bin Lāden during the Afghan War. Newspapers and magazines published in the United States and other countries reported on the relationship between Ja'far Umar Thalib and Bin Lāden and the equal threat that might be posed by the Laskar Jihad commander.

The New York Times, for instance, published an article explaining the possible linkages between the two figures. After reporting that for the previous two years Bin Lāden had been working to establish a beachhead in the world's most-populous Muslim nation, where members of his organization had brought millions of dollars for radical Islamic organizations, recruited members and provided military training, the article suggested that Ja'far Umar Thalib should be taken very seriously by the United States government because he was 'as dangerous as Bin Lāden'. It reported that Ja'far Umar Thalib was in Afghanistan during the 1980s and had met with Bin Lāden in Peshawar in 1987.[60] In another article *The New York Times* again reported the linkage, denying Ja'far Umar Thalib's statement that blamed Bin Lāden. Exacerbating matters, the newspaper quoted Harold Crouch, an Indonesian observer from the Australian National University, claiming that a number of Laskar Jihad fighters were capable of piloting aircraft.[61] The Indonesian weekly *Tempo* criticized these reports as products of American paranoia in the wake of the 11 September tragedy.[62]

Certainly, Ja'far Umar Thalib denied all allegations, although he admitted that he had met with Bin Lāden and that a Bin Lāden envoy had met him in Ambon and offered financial support and weaponry. In interviews he accused Bin Lāden of being a sectarian Muslim (*khārijī*) ignorant of proper Islam, a repetition of his harsh criticism of Bin Lāden in the journal *Salafy* seven years earlier. *Laskar Jihad Online* published a *fatwā* by the highest Saudi *'ulamā'* declaring that Bin Lāden deviated from proper Islam because of his rebellion against the Saudi Arabian government, and removed the list of links with jihad groups in the rest of the Muslim world.

Bending under the pressure, Ja'far Umar Thalib sought to bring himself closer to established Muslim organizations. He appeared in a number of public

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[60] Raymon Bonner and Jane Perlez, 'A Nation Challenged: Asian Terror; al Qaeda Moving into Indonesia, Official Fear', *The New York Times* (23 January 2002).

[61] Andrew Marshall, 'The Threat of Jaffar', *The New York Times* (10 March 2002).

[62] Irfan Budiman et al., 'Ja'far Umar Thalib Setara Usamah bin Ladin?' *Tempo* (24 March 2002), pp. 24-5.

discussions and meetings with Muslim leaders, including in the Islam-West Dialogue initiated by the Muhammadiyah and attended by the United States and British Ambassadors, Ralph L. Boyce and Richard Gozney, respectively. His presence there drew criticism from his lieutenants, who condemned his inconsistency and pragmatism. From this moment on a fragmentation in Laskar Jihad organization became palpable.[63] It was aggravated by the success achieved by the Governor of the Moluccas in setting up the Badan Imarat Muslim Maluku (the Council of United Moluccan Muslims, BIMM), which Laskar Jihad criticized as a product of government design. Chaired by Ali Fauzy, it was responsible for reconciliation attempts between Muslims and Christians initiated by the local government.[64]

In spite of Ja'far Umar Thalib's endeavours to deny the possible linkage between his group and al Qaeda, the sustainability of Laskar Jihad, which was also afflicted by a financial crisis, was difficult to maintain. Megawati, who became the first state leader to visit Bush after 11 September, apparently could not withdraw promises he had made to join the international coalition against terrorism. Under pressure from the United States, Megawati's administration eventually arrested militants associated with Jama'ah Islamiyah. But these arrests also entailed the interrogations of a dozen Laskar Jihad fighters, spreading alarm among other fighters. Caught in this unpleasant situation, Ja'far Umar Thalib increasingly lost support and with it the hope of maintaining the sustainability of his drama.

Ja'far Umar Thalib still attempted to negotiate the position of Laskar Jihad by sending hundreds of his fighters, who just returned home from the Moluccas, to Ngawi in East Java in January 2002, in the hope of mobilizing sympathy and support from other conservative Muslim groups. They attacked gambling dens and other places of 'vice' owned by a local PDI-P activist, but encountered strong resistance from the party's security force. Each side lost a dozen men and police arrested several dozen Laskar Jihad members, whose continued imprisonment some blamed on their leader when he apparently failed to procure their release.[65] Disappointment in Ja'far Umar Thalib spread among his followers.

In tandem with the increasing pressure that Laskar Jihad felt after 11 September, opposition to its jihad arose among Indonesian Muslims advocating liberal Islam. Jaringan Islam Liberal (Liberal Islam Network, JIL), established in March 2001 by young Muslim thinkers under the leadership of Ulil Absar Abdalla, led this opposition. The group's rise was welcomed by moderate Muslims of the Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, who had felt increasingly

[63] Interview with Eko Raharjo, the chairman of the information division of FKAWJ, Yogyakarta, 20 December 2003.
[64] Interview with Ali Fauzy, Ambon, 22 April 2003.
[65] Interview with Abdurrahman Abu Khalid, the leader of the Laskar Jihad mission to Ngawi, Yogyakarta, 23 December 2002.

awkward given the spread of religious radicalism. In organizing their programmes, the Liberal Islam Network received considerable financial support from the American funding agencies the Ford Foundation and the Asia Foundation.

The proliferation of liberal Islamic discourse in favor of democracy, human rights, gender equality, freedom of thought and progressiveness became the main goal of the Liberal Islam Network. Proponents consistently rejected the concept of totality in Islam, the imposition of *sharī'a* by the state, the identification of jihad with armed holy war and gender inequality.[66] In short, they advocated what was compatible with the interests of the funding foundations, which, within the framework of the United States global campaign against radical Islam, sought to support activities of liberal groups across the world to undermine their radical foes.[67] In order to reach a broad audience, they used various media channels, including the Internet, newspapers, magazines, radio and television. They regularly opened discussion forums, published articles in various newspapers and broadcast talk shows with liberal Muslim thinkers.

The open opposition voiced by the Liberal Islam Network triggered anger among a number of radical Islamist leaders, including Ja'far Umar Thalib and Muhammad Rizieq Syihab. They accused the organization of being part of the conspiracy to destroy Islam. According to Ja'far Umar Thalib, the difference between Laskar Jihad and the Liberal Islam Network was like the difference between Islam and *kufr*, implicitly excommunicating his liberal opponents. Some radical Islamist group members attacked one Liberal Islam Network supporter when the latter published an article the former considered disrespectful to Islam. Their criticism reverberated loudly in Islamist media. *Suara Hidayatullah*, for instance, condemned liberal Muslims as masked secularists who rejected totality in Islam.[68] It published a feature predicting the destruction of the Indonesian nation-state because of the proliferation of liberal Islam's ideas.[69]

It is worth mentioning that the birth of the Liberal Islam Network marked the rise of widespread consciousness among mainstream Muslim organizations, such as the Nahdlatul Ulama and the Muhammadiyah, that represent the majority of Indonesian Muslims and work to disseminate discourses of inter-religious harmony, democracy, egalitarianism and gender equality. The leadership of both organizations sought to encourage the creation

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[66] See the website of the liberal Islam, www.islamlib.com.

[67] An illustration of the actual agenda behind the sort of 'Liberal Islam' that America is now so feverishly seeking to promote is provided by a recent report prepared by the RAND Corporation, a conservative American think-tank. See Cheryl Benard, 'Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources and Strategies', *www.rand.org/publications/MR/MR1716*.

[68] 'Islam Liberal, Sekularis Berkedok Muslim', *Suara Hidayatullah*, February 2002.

[69] Abdillah Razak, Idris Rustamaji, 'Tragedi Presiden Uzil Bashar Afdhalla' and 'Jakarta, Maret 2038', *Suara Hidayatullah*, February 2002.

of non-governmental organizations, which became centres where potential scholars work to spread bold new thinking about the issues of pluralism, the inclusiveness of Islam, and gender equality. At the same time, they continued to exercise a profoundly moderating and democratic influence on Islam and Indonesian politics through their campaigns for compatibility between Islam and democracy and their condemnation of Islamic radicalism. They not only rejected proposals to implement *sharīʻa* but also organized meetings to condemn terrorist actions committed in the name of Islam. To them, terrorism cannot be tolerated, since it is in total opposition to Islam.

Malino Agreement

Commitment to support the global campaign against terrorism forced the Indonesian government to intensify its efforts to bring combating parties in the Moluccas to the negotiation table. The Coordinating Minister for People's Welfare, Yusuf Kalla, and the Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs, Susilo Bambang Yudoyono, met in Malino, South Sulawesi, with representatives of Muslim and Christian parties. On 13 February 2002, seventy members of the Christian and Muslim delegations signed the Second Malino Agreement (*Kesepakatan Malino II*), an 11-point joint declaration that promised, among other things:

1. To end all conflict and violence;
2. To abide by due process of law which is to be enforced fairly, honestly, and consistently with the support of the whole Moluccan society ;
3. To reject all separatist movements, including aspirations for a Republic of South Moluccas (RMS);
4. To emphasize the rights of the Moluccan people to stay and work legally in the Republic of Indonesia nationwide and in the Moluccan province, by respecting the local culture and law and order;
5. To ban and disarm illegal armed organizations, groups, or militias, in accordance with the existing law; outside parties that disturb the peace in the Moluccas will be expelled from the islands;
6. To set up a national independent investigation team to investigate thoroughly the incident of 19 January 1999 and the alleged involvement of FKM, RMS, Christian RMS and Laskar Jihad, as well as forced conversion and other human rights violations.[70]

[70] See "Butir-butir Perjanjian Malino," *Kompas*, 5 May 2002; see also S. Sinansari Ecip, *Bila Cengkeh Tak Berbunga (Membuka Rusuh Ambon)* (Jakarta: Cahaya Timur, 2003), pp. 154-5.

The Malino Agreement eventually closed the space that had enabled Laskar Jihad's drama. Under this agreement, Laskar Jihad was to be expelled from the Moluccas. Ja'far Umar Thalib repeatedly refused to withdraw his fighters and instead attempted to gain the support of different parties.[71] Some support came from the leaders of radical local groups, including M. Husni Putuhena and Mohammad Attamimy, who argued that the parties who signed the accord were not proper representatives of Muslims and Christians, respectively. But all efforts apparently failed, since the combating parties, the government and the security apparatus were not willing to compromise with any party defying the agreement. They continued to force Laskar Jihad to hand over its guns and retreat from the Moluccas.

Grasping the importance of the situation, Ja'far Umar Thalib sought to contrive a consolidation. He organized a series of gatherings in several places in Central Sulawesi and the Moluccas. In Ambon on 24 April 2002, he called on his fighters to maintain their spirit to wage jihad against Christians. He said war needed to continue because the Front Kedaulatan Maluku led by Alex Manuputti had intensified its activities by displaying RMS flags in the period leading up to the commemoration of the RMS anniversary on 25 April 2002. The day after, he broadcast 'a war declaration' on *Radio Suara Perjuangan Muslim Maluku*. In it he accused Governor M. Saleh Latuconsina, the civilian emergency authority, of collaborating with Protestant churches and RMS to undermine Islam and cited the display of RMS flags as proof. Similarly, he criticized the Commander of the Kodam Pattimura and the Head of Regional Police of the Moluccas and accused them of links to Christian detractors. He warned these three regional authorities to repent and return to the right path and asked his fighters to prepare themselves to wage a war to the last drop of blood:

> 'We are grateful to Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala praise be to the Almighty Who has chosen us as His soldiers. Allah's soldiers have been given a military obligation as stated by Allah, "Jihad is ordained for you though you dislike it and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you. Allah knows but you do not know!" Therefore, Allah has ordained the military obligation for us as Allah's soldiers….We all place our trust in Allah, rejecting all forms of sweeping and the like. We are prepared to confront any type of armed vehicle. In fact, we are prepared to confront jet fighters or combat helicopters. We don't care. This is all part of a warning to the world. Listen, you accomplices of the United States. Listen, you accomplices of the World Council of Churches. Listen, you accomplices of Zionist evangelists. Listen, you Jews and Christians: We Muslims are inviting the US military to prove

[71] Ja'far Umar Thalib, "Mustahil Menarik Laskar Jihad", interview, *Tempo* (26 May 2002), p. 27.

> its power in the Moluccas. Let us fight to the finish. Let us prove for the umpteenth time that the Muslim faithful cannot be conquered by over-exaggerated-physical power….The second Afghanistan War will take place in the Moluccas if you are determined to carry out your threat, O America. Now you, the US, are suffering defeats, various terrifying strikes in Afghanistan. Let us meet gallantly on the field of battle…'[72]

This declaration can be read as the culmination of Ja'far Umar Thalib's frustration in the face of his failure to maintain his jihad drama in the Moluccas. It can also be read as a last futile effort to reinvigorate the spirit of his fighters to return to the battlefield. Indeed, shortly after the declaration of war and the display of RMS flags by the Front Kedaulatan Maluku, a group of armed people attacked Soya, a Christian village near Kebun Cengkeh. This attack claimed twelve casualties; a church and twenty houses were burnt down. But a member of a local militia group I interviewed claimed that this attack was not conducted by Laskar Jihad, but by his own group instead.[73]

Because of the declaration, the police arrested Ja'far Umar Thalib on 4 May 2002, on his return from Ambon. He was accused of having defamed the president and the civil emergency authority in the Moluccas. The day before, the police had arrested Alex Manuputti on suspicion of having planned a rebellion against the Indonesian government. Ja'far Umar Thalib's arrest provoked harsh reactions from hard-line Muslim leaders. Habib Rizieq Syihab, Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, Husein Umar and Ahmad Sumargono came to police headquarters to demand his release. The Vice President, Hamzah Haz, visited him in prison and embraced him warmly, declaring that he too felt the arrest was politically motivated.[74] Ironically, however, no Laskar Jihad fighters came to visit him as they had after his arrest in April 2001.

In the absence of Ja'far Umar Thalib, Laskar Jihad organized the so-called National Workshop in Jakarta in May 2002, aimed at alleviating its negative image as a militia organization linked to al Qaeda. A number of high-ranking officials attended this workshop opened by Hamzah Haz. In their recommendations, participants asked the government to monitor the threat of separatism and widespread vice, including drugs, alcohol, gambling, prostitution and pornography. They also asked the government to develop a religious education programme as a prerequisite towards the establishment of a religious-moral-oriented society. In addition, they encouraged all Indonesian Muslims to

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[72] For a complete text, see *www.angelfire.com/rock/hotburrito/laskar/spmm010502.html* (29 July 2002).

[73] Interview with Junaidi A.B., Ambon, 27 April 2003.

[74] See Edy Budiyarso, 'Dari Medan Jihad ke Dalam Tahanan', *Tempo* (19 May 2002), p. 27.

continue the struggle for the implementation of *sharīʻa* via constitutional channels.[75]

The End of the Drama

Just five days after the bombing of Paddy's Café and the Sari Club at Legian, Bali, on 12 October 2002, Laskar Jihad surprisingly disbanded. Ja'far Umar Thalib, who had been released in the meantime, gave a press conference stating that Laskar Jihad had been disbanded in accordance with the *fatwā* of Rabīʻ ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī, which demanded its disbanding because of its deviation from the aim of its creation. Reverting to domestic matters, he admitted that the presence of Laskar Jihad in the Moluccas was no longer needed because the situation there had become relatively secure and the security apparatus had been able to carry out its duty properly.

Many people believed that the disbanding of Laskar Jihad was related to the release of Ja'far Umar Thalib. The admission that Laskar Jihad is no longer needed can apparently be considered the price he had to pay for his release. But this speculation did not account for internal dynamics that contributed a great deal to the group's fate. Long before the bombs exploded in Bali, Laskar Jihad had in fact been afflicted by a financial crisis aggravated by the fading trust of lieutenants in group leaders. They held the commander, Ja'far Umar Thalib, and the chairman of FKAWJ, Ayip Syafruddin, responsible for making Laskar Jihad part of an embarrassing political game. As far as they were concerned, these two leaders had sold out Laskar Jihad for their own political interests. Their reluctance to visit Ja'far Umar Thalib when he was in jail and their absence in the national workshop in May 2002 organized at the initiative of Ayip Syafruddin clearly communicated their disappointment to the two leaders.

In fact, signs for this fragmentation had already appeared shortly after the Kebun Cengkeh incident. Some Salafi *ustāzs* on the advisory body of FKAWJ began to feel that the political steps taken by Ja'far Umar Thalib had deviated from the original direction of Laskar Jihad's struggle. A number of them, such as Abu Munzir Zul Akmal and Abu Muhammad Zulkarnain, requested clarification from Ja'far Umar Thalib. Unsatisfied with his explanation, they mobilize support from other Salafi *ustāzs* to work toward the disbanding of Laskar Jihad. As far as they were concerned, Laskar Jihad had strayed from Salafist doctrine because of the personal interests of its commander-in-chief, Ja'far Umar Thalib, and the chairman of FKAWJ, Ayip Syafruddin.[76]

[75] 'Rekomendasi Musyawarah Kerja Nasional 2002 Forum Komunikasi Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jamaah', *www.laskarjihad.or.id*, 23 May 2002.

[76] Interview with Muhammad Ihsan, a member of the advisory body of FKAWJ, Yogyakarta, 23 December 2003.

Their disappointment mounted when Ja'far Umar Thalib frequently appeared on television side by side with a number of politicians and leaders of various hard-line Muslim organizations who had previously been accused by Ja'far Umar Thalib of being proponents of the *da'wa ḥizbiyya*. Zul Akmal and Zulkarnain sent a letter to the Saudi scholar, Rabī' ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī, explaining the deviations committed by Ja'far Umar Thalib and requesting a *fatwā* concerning the existence of Laskar Jihad. In response, the *muftī* issued a *fatwā* recommending Laskar Jihad disband.

This *fatwā* emerged as a weapon for the two *ustāzs* to mobilize further support from other Salafi *ustāzs* and main lieutenants of Laskar Jihad. To clarify the matter, they sent Usamah Faisal Mahri and Lukman Baabduh to Saudi Arabia to meet personally with Rabī' ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī. In front of these two emissaries, Rabī' ibn Hādī al-Madkhalī strongly criticized Ja'far Umar Thalib, saying that in the hands of Ja'far Umar Thalib the Islamic Salafi jihad had resorted to a heretical political jihad that is no different from the jihad of Ikhwān al-Muslimīn. As a result, opposition to Ja'far Umar Thalib grew more widespread. The Salafi *ustāzs* associated with the FKAWJ advisory body eventually organized a special session to discuss the disbanding of Laskar Jihad. It convened in October 2002 in Yogyakarta. Almost all *ustāzs* associated with the FKAWJ advisory body were present. So was Ja'far Umar Thalib. But having heard that the reason for the session was to disband Laskar Jihad, Ja'far Umar Thalib walked out. The session continued without him and finalized a five-point accord:

(1) FKAWJ and its paramilitary organization, Laskar Jihad, were set up solely for the magnificence of jihad for the cause of Allah on the basis of the Salafi *manhāj* (method) and *fatwās* of the Salafi *'ulamā'*;

(2) In the struggle to wage jihad in the Moluccas, FKAWJ and Laskar Jihad were committed to evaluate and correct themselves consistently, in line with the advices given by the *'ulamā'*;

(3) In the course of time, however, FKAWJ and Laskar Jihad appeared to have deviated from the Salafi *manhāj* and its moral principle because of the neglect of some of their leaders to consistently follow *sharī'a*;

For these reasons, all participants of the session declared:

(4) To demand that the leaders repent directly from all mistakes and deviations they had committed;

(5) To convey gratitude to the prominent Salafi '*ulamā'* for their advice that FKAWJ and Laskar Jihad should be banned.

A delegation of eight *ustāzs* then went to meet Ja'far Umar Thalib and asked him to proclaim Laskar Jihad disbanded immediately. He was reportedly

angry and rejected the proposal strongly. But the *ustāzs* persistently said that the disbandment had been agreed by all FKAWJ branches and, consequently, FKAWJ and Laskar Jihad *de facto* no longer existed. They even stated that they were prepared to remove all remaining symbols of FKAWJ and Laskar Jihad. Despite this pressure, Ja'far Umar Thalib held firm. Only after the Bali bombs exploded did he suddenly emerged to give a press conference and proclaim Laskar Jihad disbanded.

Afterward, Ja'far Umar Thalib was left behind by all the *ustāzs* and lieutenants of Laskar Jihad. When I visited him in December 2002, he was alone. Even the students of the Pesantren Ihyaus Sunnah had moved to other Salafi *pesantrens*, continuing their studies with other Salafi *ustāzs*. He sought to seek new allies or simply kill his loneliness by attending *Dhikr Akbār*, a Sufi-like practice of publicly chanting 'the names of God' led by Muhammad Arifin Ilham in the Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta on 17 August 2003. For many Salafi *ustāzs*, the presence of their former leader in such a programme clearly indicated that he had deviated from the Salafi *manhāj*.[77] In retrospect, some concluded that Laskar Jihad's mission in the Moluccas was a political manouevre by group leaders at the expense of a sincere religious commitment. Some even claimed that their participation was a 'black stain' on their lives. This admission can be regarded as proof that the drama of jihad initiated by Ja'far Umar Thalib, and his attempt to become the grand hero of Indonesian Muslims, ended in failure.

[77] See Qamar Su'aidi, 'Ja'far Umar Thalib Telah Meninggalkan Kita', *www.salafy.or.id* (29 April 2004).

CHAPTER VIII
CONCLUSION

The rise of Laskar Jihad, which positioned itself at the front to declare jihad in the Moluccas and other Indonesian trouble spots, was emblematic of widespread manifestations of Islamic radicalism in the post-New Order political landscape. The group emerged at a time when similar militant organizations, such as Laskar Pembela Islam and Laskar Mujahidin Indonesia, to name but two, had succeeded in achieving prominence on the Indonesian political stage and in pursuing various forms of popular politics. The group's sudden rise has prompted observers and analysts to associate its existence exclusively with the manoeuvres of civilian and military elites anxious to preserve the status quo by mobilizing *preman* and jobless youths to enhance their position in endless rounds of political negotiations. As a counter to these speculations, I would suggest on the basis of my research that this phenomenon is the result of an interaction between the long-term dynamics of political Islam in the face of the authoritarianism of the state and the short-term repercussions of the highly disruptive transitional process following the collapse of the regime.

As I have indicated in the previous pages, the social roots of Laskar Jihad can be traced back to the mid-1980s, when Salafi communities grew in number throughout Indonesia. The growth of these communities cannot be isolated from the immensely ambitious global campaign waged by Saudi Arabia for the Wahhabization of the Muslim *umma*. Through this campaign, Saudi Arabia tried to reinforce its position as the centre of the Muslim world to counteract fading Arab Nationalism that itself was a consequence of defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israel War. Thanks to skyrocketing world oil prices, which provided considerable economic benefits during the 1970s, the kingdom sponsored a variety of *da'wa* activities throughout the Muslim world, working with local agents to construct mosques and Islamic schools and publish and distribute Islamic books. In this way Wahhabism was exported and disseminated. This campaign was later intensified, particularly in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution and the Juhaymān tragedy in 1979.

Wahhabi influence reached Indonesia mainly through DDII, whose ambition to revive the political role of the Masyumi had failed against the New Order regime's implacable marginalizing of any expressions of Muslim politics. With generous Saudi financial support, DDII sponsored not only the

construction of mosques and Islamic schools but also the dispatch of Indonesian youths to study in various Middle Eastern universities. In order to facilitate DDII attempts to intensify its campaign, Saudi Arabia established LPBA in Jakarta in 1980. This institute evolved into LIPIA, which has emerged as the centre of Wahhabi influence in Indonesia. One of the most palpable impacts of this campaign was a sense of Islamic resurgence on university campuses marked by an increase in students' observation of Islamic obligations, an interest in wearing *jilbab,* and the spread of Islamist books.

Keeping pace with the growing spirit among university students to express their Islamic identity more explicitly, a new type of Muslim intellectual imbued with the zeal to disseminate Wahhabism under the banner of the Salafi *da'wa* movement took centre stage. Financially secure, such people found themselves in a position to set up foundations supported directly by philanthropic agents in the Middle East. Initially, their activism took place on university campuses, where they campaigned side by side with a number of other Islamic movements. In the course of time, they succeeded in establishing an exclusive Islamic movement that organized a variety of *da'wa* activities in mosques located both on the outskirts of cities and in villages. The shift in the state attitude towards accommodating political Islam at the beginning of the 1990s provided fertile soil for the expansion of the movement.

The history of the Salafi movement in this most populous of Muslim countries perfectly demonstrates how transnational politics transcended established cultural and political boundaries and penetrated different cultural and political milieus. Here globalization displays its tremendous impact on twentieth-century Muslim politics. Technological advances born of globalization have provided for the distribution of a global Islamic message; individuals have been able to claim and benefit from a global identity as members of a community of observant believers—the *umma*. But any determination of its impact must take into account its intersection with the dynamics of the relationship between Islam and the state in specific local contexts. Taken together, these two aspects might explain the divergent manifestations of political Islam and their multiplicity in certain areas and at particular periods of time.

Despite such beneficent auguries, the rapid expansion of the Salafi movement was coupled with an eruption of tension among its protagonists, particularly following the outbreak of the Gulf War in 1990. This tension developed as competition intensified among those who had just returned from Salafi teaching centres in the Middle East for prized positions as the movement's legitimate representatives. As a result, fragmentation and conflict became inevitable. The movement split into two currents: the so-called Sururis and non-Sururis. Triggered by the *Surūriyya* issue, the division was fueled by Ja'far Umar Thalib's accusing other Salafi leaders, including Abu Nida, Ahmad Faiz Asifuddin, Yusuf Usman Baisa, Muhammad Yusuf Harun, Ahmad Zawawi and

Abdul Hakim Abdat, of being sympathizers of Muḥammad ibn Surūr bin Nayef Zayn al-ʻĀbidīn, a critic of Saudi Arabia's decision to invite American troops to defend its territory from an apparently imminent invasion by Saddam Hussein. The main bone of the contention was in fact financial support from the Middle East. Because of this fragmentation, a clear distinction was drawn between the Salafis and the followers of other Islamic movements.

The establishment and growth of Laskar Jihad was determined to a great extent by Ja'far Umar Thalib, its commander-in-chief. The central figure among Laskar Jihad fighters, he founded the organization, defined its direction and determined the course of its activism. Born into a Hadrami family in Malang, East Java, and raised in the puritanical atmosphere of al-Irsyad, he emerged as a typical cadre of Islamism, an ambitious youth with a rebellious streak. He was a student at the Pesantren of Persis in Bangil, East Java, where he sharpened his insights into Islamic reformism. Next, he moved to Jakarta to study at LIPIA, where he studied Arabic and explored the militant views of Sayyid Quṭb, the most prominent spokesman of political Islam and author of *Fī Ẓilāl al-Qur'ān*. Ja'far Umar Thalib's uncompromising attitude showed in his outspoken repudiation of *asas tunggal* policy enforced by the New Order regime, for which he suffered stern investigations by military intelligence agents. After a falling out with a member of the teaching staff, he dropped out of LIPIA. In spite of this, LIPIA paved the way for him to study abroad at the Mawdudi Islamic Institute in Lahore, Pakistan, in 1987.

The militancy of Ja'far Umar Thalib grew to maturity in Pakistan, which was directly engaged in mobilizing Muslim youths around the world to fight shoulder to shoulder with Afghan *mujāhids* to defeat the Red Army of the then Soviet Union. Afghanistan was among several countries, including Saudi Arabia, that formed an axis created by the United States to halt communist influence in Central Asia. In Pakistan, Ja'far Umar Thalib began his jihad by first joining al-Khairiyah Base Came in Peshawar. He was said to have supported the factions of both Abu Sayyaf and Hikmatyar in the Afghan *mujāhids*. However, the puritanical insights cultivated previously at al-Irsyad, Persis and LIPIA eventually led him to join the Jamāʻat al-Qur'ān wa ahl Ḥadīth, a Saudi-supported faction led by Jamil al-Rahman, a fanatical supporter of Wahhabism. Within this faction, Ja'far Umar Thalib shared experiences with thousands of jihad volunteers from all over the Muslim world and established contacts with the transnational Salafi *daʻwa* movement.

The involvement of Ja'far Umar Thalib in the *daʻwa* activities of the Salafi movement ousted the leadership of Abu Nida, thereby reinforcing to some extent the central position of Hadramis in the history of Islamic reform in Indonesia. He became the most important figure in the informal social network interlocking a dozen Salafi teaching centres scattered throughout various regions in the country. This achievement was partly determined by his success in establishing a special linkage with Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādiʻī, a Salafi ideologue

par excellence in Yemen, and other prominent Salafi authorities in the Middle East. Its non-hierarchical and open character notwithstanding, this network played an important role in the spread of the Salafi movement and in the fame of Ja'far Umar Thalib himself. Lessons, study circles, informal meetings and a myriad of other *da'wa* activities were firmly established in the network, serving as a vehicle for the production, articulation and dissemination of Salafi messages. Its centre was the Pesantren Ihyaus Sunnah led by Ja'far Umar Thalib, which published the periodical *Salafy* as its mouthpiece. Despite its remarkable influence, the network barely registered among Middle Eastern funding sources, thus it remained marginal and poor. 'Established Salafi foundations' led by the rivals of Ja'far Umar Thalib, however, received generous financial support. He attempted to remedy this situation by exploiting the *Surūriyya* issue in the hope of seizing the advantage. But this attempt appears to have backfired. It simply withheld him from the financial support of the foundations, which consistently demanded the unity and solidarity of the Salafis in working together to achieve the Salafi *da'wa* goals as a funding criterion.

Despite the gloom under these unfavourable conditions, the personal ties established between Ja'far Umar Thalib and his followers in the network continued to expand. These ties enabled him to make some efforts to mobilize the masses in an attempt to respond to a variety of actual political issues which arose in the wake of the disruption caused by the Asian economic crisis in mid-1997 and the ensuing transitional process. The willingness to mobilize Salafis mounted particularly after Ja'far Umar Thalib had witnessed the success of Muhammad Rizieq Syihab and some other young Islamist figures in occupying the centre of the political stage in Indonesia by perpetrating sweepings on cafes, discotheques, casinos, and brothels, and staging demonstrations and rallies to demand the comprehensive implementation of *sharī'a*. At that moment, some allies united in their attempts to preserve the status quo seized the chance to utilize the Salafis associated with Ja'far Umar Thalib for their own political interests in their attempts to confront the opposition which had seized the opportunity to demand greater changes towards democracy. Ja'far Umar Thalib realized it was the moment when he and his followers had to claim centre stage, proclaiming their determination to fight jihad in the Moluccas.

The main reason put forward by Ja'far Umar Thalib for calling for jihad was that after almost one year the bloody communal conflict in the Moluccas continued to rage, claiming the lives of thousands of innocent Muslims. He took the Tobelo massacre of more than 500 Muslims by Christians in December 1999 as an example to demonstrate the ferocity of the conflict. In this context he strongly criticized Abdurrahman Wahid, the then president, for having been indifferent to the fate of Muslims in the islands and having failed to give proper protection to his citizens. This criticism reverberated loudly alongside the mounting rivalry between Wahid and his political contenders. While a dozen conservative Muslim leaders mobilized their own masses to voice their

sympathy for the Moluccan Muslims, Ja'far Umar Thalib went a step further, issuing a jihad resolution. As far as he was concerned, jihad was essential because the escalation of the conflict could not be absolved from the intervention of international Zionist-cum-Christian conspiracy forces led by the United States, which had an agenda to undermine Islam and the Muslim *umma* in Indonesia.

The key to the success of Ja'far Umar Thalib in mobilizing fighters for jihad in the Moluccas was the presence of the pre-existing informal social network he had built among the Salafis. This network provided the foundation for the birth of FKAWJ, which functioned as an umbrella organization charged with a special duty of coordinating various planned collective actions by the Salafis. The strength and cohesiveness of the ties in the network reduced the free riding problem. Following the jihad resolution issued by Ja'far Umar Thalib, thousands of young Salafis from various regions in Indonesia resolutely reported to the branch offices of FKAWJ, registering to join Laskar Jihad. The ability of Ja'far Umar Thalib to construct action frames, stressing the importance of jihad in the face of the challenges posed by the enemies of Islam, contributed a great deal to the formation of the organization. With powerful rhetoric he unleashed the emotion of the Salafis and, at the same time, affected the sentiments of the constituencies of Islamism at large. This was strengthened and legitimized by *fatwās* from some prominent religious authorities in the Middle East. On the basis of these *fatwās*, Ja'far Umar Thalib convincingly declared the Moluccan conflict to be a religious war between Muslims and Christians, which demanded the intervention of Muslims through jihad. Participation in this 'war' was considered an individual duty. As such, and like prayer or fasting, according to Islamic law every Muslim is accountable for his non-performance of this duty.

The establishment of Laskar Jihad confirms that under certain conducive political circumstances a resort to violence is an elective choice among Islamic militant groups, even from the non-political wings that reject the use of revolutionary means in the struggle to reach the final goal. As a *da'wa* community concerned with the purity of the faith, *tawḥīd*, and the subsequent moral integrity of individuals, the Salafis had previously considered political activism, not to mention violence, an anathema to Islam. The resort to violence by Laskar Jihad proves that the repudiation of political activism by the Salafis was not a rigidly adhered to point; it was more a strategy to deal with the distressing and discouraging political situation under an uncompromising secular ruling regime, rather than a desirable form of activism. The basic premises in their doctrines were in fact political in nature. The themes of reform centred on the issue of the purity of *tawḥīd*, though they had been isolated from the idea of revolutionary jihad, not only demanded that Salafis be concerned with the comprehensive implementation of *sharī'a*, but also required them to repudiate democracy and consequently the system of the nation-state. Democracy is considered to be in opposition to the principle of God's Sovereignty, which

derives from the absolute Oneness of God. More important perhaps, these themes provided the foundation for the call for jihad in the Moluccas, where it was regarded as a mechanism to defend Muslims from the attacks of war-mongering infidels.

Furthermore, the fact that the resort of the Salafi community to violence went hand-in-hand with the radicalization of its discourse casts light on the position held by ideology in a militant Islamist movement: This is not static, but rather dynamic, and develops in line with the contextual changes. The ideology of a social movement is best understood in relation to the struggle of the movement's actors over the production of ideas, meaning that it does not merely stand as a carrier of extant ideas that flow statically from the movement's underlying strains. Yet, the role of ideology remains crucial to the establishment of a social movement, serving primarily as an ethical, moral and normative principle that guides individual members towards understanding of the frame constructed by movement actors. In other words, ideology functions as a resource of culture at the service of framing.

Despite the central role of Ja'far Umar Thalib, the formation of Laskar Jihad was significantly determined by the resoluteness and readiness of thousands of Salafis to risk their lives by going to fight in the Moluccas. They were generally young militants from small towns or villages in the countryside who had an *abangan* background. Only a few of them came from the families of modern *santri*, particularly the Muhammadiyah. Because of the hurly-burly of the rapid modernization process, they have had the opportunity to migrate to big cities in order to pursue higher education or seek jobs. Ironically, the social mobility of these youths has been mired in the failure of the New Order regime to fulfil its development promises, particularly to make good on its promise to distribute public goods and resources for all. This deficiency has been aggravated by rampant corruption and a lack of public accountability. The upshot is many of these young people have become discontented and frustrated. Globalization accelerates this frustration to the extent that their identity is shaken. These deprived youths have tried to release their frustration by withdrawing themselves from the 'anything goes' open society around them. One option is to establish an enclave, a closed system which distinguishes itself by an exclusive pattern of dress, interactions and relationships. By doing so, they achieve control of the social space by shrinking the world to the size of their community.

These deprived youths feel that jihad is one way to express their resentment and frustration. This expression is primarily symbolic, being directed at the United States, which they consider to be the backbone of the hegemonic global powers responsible for all forms of injustice and chaos in the world. By joining in the drama of jihad staged by Ja'far Umar Thalib, such a disaffected group had the opportunity to display their identity and negotiate their illusory strength. Under the banner of jihad, they feel free to shout out, wave swords and

challenge much more powerful opponents. Therefore, among these youths, jihad is not only a language of protest in their attempts to break out of their own sense of frustration, but also a message conveyed to display attempts to transform and empower their marginalization. In this specific case, therefore, it was no surprise that they competed to clamber on board the ships that would take them to the Moluccas in their fervid attempts to absorb themselves into a protracted bloody communal conflict in the islands.

While acknowledging the social roots of their discontent, the jihad action launched by Laskar Jihad in the Moluccas is better understood as a drama, because this action was part of the endeavour of Salafis led by Ja'far Umar Thalib to shore up their self-image as the most committed defenders of Islam, and thereby elevate their identity. It can be conceptualized as the politics of recognition pursued by the Salafis in order to gain a place in the transnational Salafi *da'wa* network and on the map of Indonesian Islam. Though this was indubitably the driving force, the staging of this drama was made possible by the considerable support from military elites who saw this moment as the opportunity to teach Wahid a lesson and undermine his ambitious attempts to implement the principle of civilian supremacy. Not only did they allow waves of Laskar Jihad fighters to drop anchor in the Moluccas, they also provided its Special Force with training and military weapons. This military backup fuelled the fire of Laskar Jihad, which had already received significant support from various conservative Muslim organizations.

Dispatching more than seven thousand fighters to the Moluccas, Laskar Jihad was able to change the balance in the Moluccan conflict in a relatively short time. The influx of its fighters, who brought with them the spirit of jihad, awoke the consciousness of Moluccan Muslims of the need to fight against Christians, who had had the upper hand up until then, to the last drop of blood. Despite its limited contribution in terms of participation in real battles, Laskar Jihad consequently had no trouble winning itself the image of being a band of heroes predestined to sacrifice their lives in defending Moluccan Muslims from the attacks of belligerent infidels. This image was reinforced by its concern with *da'wa* and social activities, including the establishment of sites for Qur'anic recital courses, Islamic primary schools, and a medical clinic. Alongside the increasing demands for a return to the Jakarta Charter, this group even succeeded in inscribing its image as the champion in the comprehensive implementation of *sharī'a*, particularly when it enforced a *rajm* sentence on one member who had raped a local girl.

The changes in the political landscape following Megawati's ascension to power in the place of Wahid had a profound impact on the sustainability of the Laskar Jihad operations in the Moluccas. The policy adopted by Megawati of not intervening in the internal affairs of the military and thereby securing the image of this institution prompted the senior military command to bring the Moluccan conflict quickly to an end. Yon Gab, which was set up by TNI during

Wahid's presidency, lost no time in intensifying its sweeping actions on armed militia groups operating in the Moluccas and gradually constricted the room to manouevre available to Laskar Jihad. These actions culminated in the Kebun Cengkeh incident in mid-2002. The attempts of Megawati's administration to conduct a series of arrests of militants while endeavouring to curb the remaining communal conflicts, in conjunction with the global campaign against terrorism launched by the United States, sent further spurts of alarm through Laskar Jihad. Fragmentation was rife in different layers of its membership. The Malino Agreement initiated by senior ministers in Megawati's cabinet eventually was the nail in the coffin of Laskar Jihad's operation in the Moluccas.

The case of Laskar Jihad indicates that the activism espoused by a militant group is very much determined by the political opportunities and constraints at work in a particular time and place. The resort of this group to violence was inexorably associated with the inability of the state to play its primary role as the guardian of social order and the enforcer of the law. Central to this problem was the nature of the transitional process from an authoritarian state to democracy at a moment when the political equilibrium was significantly shaken. In this process, remnants of the proponents of the status quo tried hard to involve new political allies in their negotiations with the opposition. This problem was aggravated by the fact that the emerging Indonesian democracy was still fragile, because of, among other causes, a serious lack of democratic rules and the narrow interests of political parties. Needless to say, the newly liberated public sphere, which enabled all elements in Indonesian society to express their opinions and interests, contributed a great deal to the creation of an inbuilt socio-political mechanism that allowed this phenomenon to occur.

It should be noted, however, that the Laskar Jihad mission to the Moluccas and the other trouble spots in Indonesia by no means indicated the success of militant Muslim groups in taking control of the Indonesian public sphere. It served instead to highlight the marginal position of militant Muslim groups and their unsuccessful efforts to gain hegemony for their discourse of glorifying militancy and violence. In other words, it is more a sign of weakness than a harbinger of success for militant Muslims. Because these militants pursue their struggle through violence, political Islam remains on the political periphery and may never succeed in changing the strategic landscape of the country. It did not change the map of Indonesian Islam. Nor has it changed the secular system of the Indonesian nation-state. The majority of Indonesian Muslims remain tolerant and opposed to the use of violence, let alone terrorism. The wave of militancy and violence that has engulfed Indonesia has instead encouraged Indonesian Muslims to work more systematically and consistently for the dissemination of discourses on democracy, gender equality and human rights.

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SAMENVATTING

De centrale vraag in mijn boek luidt: Waarom en hoe heeft de radicale islam zijn opmars gemaakt en wist deze vorm van islam zich prominenter te manifesteren in de Indonesische samenleving na de val het Nieuwe Orde regime in mei 1998, door de oprichting van een aantal islamitische paramilitaire organisaties? Mijn aandacht gaat uit naar de Laskar Jihad, waarbij ik de wortels van het verschijnsel islamitisch radicalisme volg door te kijken naar de uitbreiding van de hedendaagse Salafi gemeenschappen, die vanaf het midden van de jaren '80 in Indonesië steeds meer terrein wisten te winnen. Deze gemeenschappen, geassocieerd met de grote Saudische ambitie de Wahabitische geloofsideologie in de moslimgemeenschappen van de wereld te verspreiden, ontwikkelden zich in een rap tempo dankzij de aanzienlijke steun van Saudi-Arabië. In de loop van de tijd zijn deze gemeenschappen erin geslaagd een exclusieve stroming binnen de islamitische beweging op te zetten, die actief is in het openlijk organiseren van verschillende propaganda activiteiten in moskeeën in de buitenwijken van de Indonesische steden en op het platteland.

Ondanks zulke goede voortekenen was de snelle groei van de Salafi gemeenschappen gekoppeld aan een uitbarsting van spanningen onder de eigen aanhang, vooral na het uitbreken van de Golfoorlog in 1990. Deze spanningen ontwikkelden zich tegelijkertijd met de toenemende wedloop tussen Salafi aanhangers die net teruggekeerd waren van de opleidingscentra in het Midden-Oosten en die streden om de hoogste eer van rechtmatige vertegenwoordiger van de Salafi beweging. Deze spanningen hebben er uiteindelijk toe geleid dat fragmentatie en conflict onvermijdelijk waren. De beweging splitste zich in twee belangrijke stromingen: de zogenoemde Sururi's en non-Sururi's. Deze benaming wijst op de voornaamste opdeling aangezet door het *surūriyya* vraagstuk dat is aangewakkerd door Ja'far Umar Thalib. Hij beschuldigde andere Salafi voorstanders, zijn rivalen, van sympathie betuiging aan Muḥammad ibn Surūr bin Nayef Zayn al-ʻĀbidīn, die bekend staat als één van de lasteraars van het Saudische koningshuis en het religieuze establishment met betrekking tot de aanwezigheid van Amerikaanse militairen in het koninkrijk. Maar waar het werkelijk om ging was de financiële steun uit het Midden-Oosten.

De oprichting en de groei van de Laskar Jihad werd grotendeels bepaald door de rol en ambitie van Ja'far Umar Thalib, de opperbevelhebber van deze organisatie. Hij was de sleutelfiguur onder de strijders, zowel actief in de vormgeving van de organisatie als in het definiëren van haar richting en activiteiten. Hij is een prototype islamist die geboren en opgegroeid is in de puriteinse omgeving van Al-Irsyad en Persis, twee reformistische organisaties in Indonesië. Zijn strijdlust kwam in Pakistan tot wasdom, toen hij direct betrokken raakte, in samenwerking met Saudi-Arabië en de Verenigde Staten, bij de mobilisering van moslimjongeren over de hele wereld voor de strijd van de Afghaanse *mujāhids* tegen het toenmalige Sovjet leger in Afghanistan. Toen hij in Indonesië terugkeerde was hij onmiddellijk actief in de Salafi *da'wa* beweging en slaagde hij er in korte tijd in om zich als de belangrijkste persoon van de Indonesische Salafi's te presenteren. Deze prestatie had hij gedeeltelijk te danken aan zijn succes op het gebied van het opzetten van speciale banden met Muqbil ibn Hādī al-Wādi'ī, een vooraanstaande Salafi ideoloog uit Jemen, en een aantal andere prominente Salafi autoriteiten in het Midden-Oosten.

Met gebruikmaking van de bestaande netwerken en persoonlijke contacten, voortgekomen uit Ja'far's activisme in de Salafi beweging, mobiliseerde hij duizenden Salafi's en andere aspirant strijders om de Laskar Jihad bataljons te bemannen voor de frontlinies in de Molukken en andere crisisgebieden in Indonesië. Het voornaamste succes van deze mobilisatie kwam tot stand doordat een aantal figuren binnen de militaire elite bereid was deze poging te steunen. Zij zagen de kans om via moslim militanten Abdurrahman Wahid terug te slaan die hen van belangrijke militaire posten had ontslagen. De steun aan de militanten voorzag niet alleen van steun aan de Salafi's om onmiddellijk in actie te komen, maar was tevens een garantie om te ontsnappen aan repressie van het veiligheidsapparaat en het leger. Daar kwam nog bij dat de kosten van hun actie laag bleven.

Binnen het kader van de samenzweringsrethoriek, waarin de zionisten en de internationale christelijke machten beschuldigd werden van escalatie van het Molukse conflict, creëerde Ja'far Umar Thalib een collectief actie raamwerk dat een overzichtelijke verandering aanmoedigde van individuën naar groepen. Op basis van dit raamwerk, aangescherpt en gelegitimeerd door *fatwās* van een aantal prominente religieuze leiders uit het Midden-Oosten, schatten de Salafi's de betekenis van hun acties in waarde en creëerden zij hiermee een nieuwe collectieve identiteit. Dankzij de kracht van de FKAWJ organisatie (Communicatie Platform Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah), die als verbindingscentrum diende, vond dit collectieve actie raamwerk snel weerklank in grote delen van de Salafi gemeenschap en onder andere aspirant jihad strijders.

De oprichting van de Laskar Jihad bevestigt dat onder bepaalde bestaande politieke omstandigheden voor islamitisch militante groepen een toevlucht tot geweld een gemakkelijkere keuze wordt, zelfs voor non-politieke vleugels binnen de Salafi gemeenschappen, die het gebruik van revolutionaire middelen in het bewerkstelligen van hun doeleinden verwerpen. In beginsel hielden de Salafi's als *da'wa* gemeenschap zich bezig met de zuiverheid van het geloof, *tawḥīd* (de eenheidsleer), en de daaruit voortvloeiende morele integriteit van individuën. Zij beschouwden politiek activisme, laat staan geweld, als een gruwel voor de islam. De toevlucht tot geweld door de Laskar Jihad toont aan dat afwijzing door Salafi's van politiek activisme niet strict werd nagevolgd; het was meer een strategie om met de voor hen bedroevende en ontmoedigende politieke situatie van een compromisloos seculier regime om te gaan dan dat zij een wenselijke vorm van activisme aannamen. Tegelijkertijd toont dit feit aan dat de positie van ideologie in een militante islamistische organisatie eerder dynamisch is dan statisch, en zich conform de veranderende omstandigheden ontwikkelt. Dit is het best te begrijpen met betrekking tot de strijd die actoren van de beweging leveren om de ontwikkeling van ideeën. De beweging staat dus niet alleen als drager van bestaande ideeën die op statische wijze opkomen uit de onderliggende spanningen en gevoelens van de beweging.

Ondanks de centrale rol van Ja'far Umar Thalib, werd de formatie van de Laskar Jihad voornamelijk bepaald door de vastberadenheid en bereidheid van duizenden Salafi's, die bereid waren hun leven te riskeren voor de strijd in de Molukken. Over het algemeen waren het jonge militanten uit de kleine steden en dorpen met een *abangan* achtergrond. Slechts een enkeling was afkomstig van moderne, voornamelijk Muhammadiyah, *santri* families. Vanwege het tumult rond de snelle modernisering hadden zij de mogelijkheid om naar de grote steden te migreren om hoger onderwijs te volgen en werk te zoeken. Het is nogal ironisch, dat de sociale mobiliteit van deze jongeren is stil komen te staan door het falen van het Nieuwe Orde regime zijn beloften van ontwikkeling waar te maken door goede garanties af te geven om gemeenschappelijke goederen en diensten voor iedereen te distribueren. Deze tekortkoming is verergerd door buitensporige corruptie en een gebrek aan publieke verantwoordelijkheid. Het eind van het liedje is dat veel van deze jonge mensen ontevreden zijn en gefrustreerd zijn geraakt.

Deze misdeelde jongeren voelen dat de jihad één van de manieren is om aan hun ongenoegen en frustratie uiting te geven. Deze uiting is in beginsel symbolisch, gericht tegen de Verenigde Staten die zij als de ruggengraat van wereldhegemonie zien, die verantwoordelijk is voor alle vormen van onrecht en chaos in de wereld. Door zich te voegen in de heilige strijd, aangevoerd door Ja'far Umar Thalib, kregen de ontevreden jongeren de kans om zich te

ontplooien en hun denkbeeldige kracht tot stand te brengen. Onder de banier van de jihad voelen zij de vrijheid om te schreeuwen, met zwaarden te zwaaien en nog machtigere tegenstanders uit te dagen. Aldus is de jihad voor deze jongeren niet alleen een uiting van protest om uit hun eigen gevoel misnoegen te komen, maar is zij tevens een boodschap van poging tot transformatie en het in staat stellen hun marginalisering tentoon te spreiden. Het was dan ook geen verrassing dat ze wedijverden om aan boord te gaan van schepen voor vertrek naar de Molukken in een vurige poging deel te nemen aan een langdurig bloedig conflict op de eilanden.

Zonder de sociale wortels van de ontevredenheid van de misnoegde jongeren te verwaarlozen, kan gesteld worden dat de jihad activiteiten van de Laskar Jihad op de Molukken te omschrijven is als een drama. Deze acties van Salafi's onder leiding van Ja'far Umar Thalib waren een onderdeel om te proberen hun zelfbeeld als de meest toegewijde verdedigers van de islam op te krikken, om zich daarmee nog beter te voelen. Dit drama maakt deel uit van hun beleid om erkenning een plaats te veroveren in het transnationale *da'wa* netwerk van Salafi's en op de kaart te staan van de Indonesische islam. De invloed van de strijders, bezield door de heilige strijd, maakte de Molukse moslims bewust om tegen de christenen, die tot de komst van de Laskar Jihad de overhand hadden, de wapens op te nemen. Ondanks het beperkte aandeel van de jihad strijders aan de echte veldslagen, wist de Laskar Jihad consequent zichzelf te presenteren als door God gezonden helden die zich opofferen om Molukse moslims te verdedigen tegen aanvallen van oorlogvoerende heidenen.

De veranderingen in de politieke constellatie na Megawati's machtsovername in 2001 was van grote invloed op de houdbaarheid van de Laskar Jihad operaties op de Molukken. De pogingen van Megawati's regering een aantal militanten te arresteren en de overgebleven etnische en religieuze conflicten de kop in te drukken, gekoppeld aan de bestrijding van het internationale terrorisme onder leiding van de Verenigde Staten, deed binnen de gelederen van de Laskar Jihad de alarmklokken luiden. Het Malino akkoord, geïnitieerd door een aantal ervaren in aanzien staande ministers, maakte aanvankelijk een einde aan de Laskar Jihad operaties op de Molukken. De Laskar Jihad kwestie geeft aan dat het activisme van een militante groepering zeer afhangt van de geboden politieke mogelijkheden en berperkingen in plaats en tijd.

Het is opmerkelijk dat de Laskar Jihad missie naar de Molukken en andere probleemgebieden in Indonesië geenszins betekent dat militante moslimorganisaties erin geslaagd zijn het openbare leven in Indonesië te beheersen. Hun missie benadrukte maar weer eens de marginale positie van militante moslim groepen en hun mislukte pogingen hegemonie te krijgen voor

hun vertoog, dat militantie en geweld verheerlijkt. Omdat deze militante groepen hun strijd voortzetten door middel van geweld blijft de politieke islam, die zij opleggen een marginaal gegeven, en zullen zij er nooit in slagen het strategische landschap van Indonesië te veranderen. Ook heeft dit fenomeen het landschap van de Indonesische islam niet veranderd. Noch heeft dit het seculiere systeem van de Indonesische staat veranderd. De meerderheid van de Indonesische moslims kiest voor tolerantie en is tegen het gebruik van geweld, laat staan terrorisme. De golf van militantie en geweld die over Indonesië heen trok heeft eerder Indonesische moslims aangemoedigd structureler en constanter te werken aan de verspreiding van ideeën als democratie, gelijkheid der seksen en mensenrechten.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Noorhaidi was born on 7 December 1971 in Amuntai, South Kalimantan, Indonesia, where he completed his primary school and junior intermediate school. He continued his study to the Islamic Higher Secondary School for Special Programme (MAPK), a pilot-project school initiated by the Department of Religious Affairs, in Yogyakarta in 1987. Having finished this school in 1990, he continued his study to the Faculty of Islamic Law at the State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN), Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta. He received his undergraduate diploma in 1994 with the predicate *cum laude*. In 1995 he was appointed as a teaching staff in the same institute. After teaching for about two years he went to the Netherlands in order to continue his study at the Master Programme in Islamic Studies at the Leiden University, under the sponsorship of the Indonesian-Netherlands Cooperation for Islamic Studies (INIS). The predicate *cum laude* was awarded in 1999 when he completed the programme. In the same year he decided to undertake M.Phil programme in Islamic Studies at the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM), the Netherlands, which he completed in 2000. In April 2001 he started conducting research for his dissertation within the framework of the "Dissemination of Religious Authority in Twentieth-Century Indonesia" at the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden, the Netherlands.